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'RESPEK VIR EK, RESPEK DIE PLEK!'^{*}
**A CASE STUDY OF A SINGLE POPULAR EDUCATOR'S
APPROACH TO PEDAGOGY IN POST-APARTHEID SOUTH
AFRICA**

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A minor dissertation presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of
the degree of Master of Philosophy in Adult Education

University of Cape Town

Faculty of the Humanities
University of Cape Town
2011

The financial assistance of the National Research Foundation (NRF) towards this research is hereby acknowledged. Opinions expressed and conclusions arrived at, are those of the author and are not necessarily to be attributed to the NRF.

^{*} Afrikaans: 'Respect for me, respect the place'. These words echo a motto that was developed by youth in a school on the Cape Flats. Mike Abrams a popular educator drew on this motto during the research to explain his key values. They are used here because they capture the democratic nature of his practice, the importance he places on valuing the knowledge of the poor and those on the 'margins', and because of the centrality of humanism in his practice.

Declaration

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ANC	African National Congress
CASE	Community Action towards a Safer Environment
GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution
IJR	Institute for Justice and Reconciliation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPO	Non-Profit Organisation
NUSAS	National Union of South African Students
PBO	Public Benefit Organisation
SADWU	South African Domestic Workers Union

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Abstract

This thesis explores the pedagogy of a single popular educator, Mike Abrams, currently practising in post-apartheid South Africa. The study aimed to describe his ideology, educational theory and practice and to explore the links between these and current social justice issues in South Africa. It also aimed to locate his practice within his personal background. Mike Abrams was chosen as the subject of the case study owing to his extensive work and commitment as a popular educator.

A case study research design was employed and qualitative research methods were used to explore Mike's pedagogy. This was taken to include his ideology, educational theory and practice, and activist strategies. Four in-depth interviews, three practice observations and a review of four documents authored and co-authored by him were undertaken. I also made use of correspondence related to his work. Findings were sorted into pre-existing themes and emerging themes were also identified. These themes were then sorted according to the study objectives.

In order to explore and conceptualize pedagogy, I drew on popular education and feminist popular education theory – in particular I considered feminist reflections on practice and criticism of what they term traditional popular education. Radical adult education discussions on ideology and activist formation were also drawn upon.

The findings gave an insight into how the concepts and principles of popular education practice were interpreted and manifested in contemporary post-apartheid South Africa. Mike's educational practice highlighted the continuing relevance of the principles of praxis; democratic relations between educators and learners, and the reciprocal nature of these roles; and of dialogical and problem-based education. Through his practice the necessity for a personal and ever evolving pedagogy was affirmed. In terms of specific insights the study illustrates a physical embodiment of the issues raised by feminist popular educators, including the importance of integrating the body, emotions and spirit and in this way engaging the human psyche in development work. Furthermore the findings confirm feminist educators' call for dealing with everyday issues that people face. Here however his practice extended beyond that of feminist popular educators: it

gives insight into how to work with those in relative positions of power and to conceptualize beyond the traditional oppressed/oppressor dichotomy.

In terms of 'practice' in the contemporary context, through praxis, Mike has developed a focus on healing, rehabilitation and reconstruction, which while humanist in approach is also the starting point for a broader political project of social justice. His practice also highlighted how a critical engagement in the new spaces that have opened up in government and civil society can provide opportunities for popular educators to engage in social justice work. The study concludes that while popular pedagogy must adapt to context it must also maintain a critical methodological approach and guard against ideological rigidity: the key principles of popular education must be kept firmly in sight.

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Acknowledgements

I would firstly like to thank Mike Abrams for his generosity in terms of the time that he made available to me and for his deep engagement during those hours. I greatly appreciate the freedom offered to understand his work in my own way, in terms of what I saw, thought and felt. Aside from all else that I learnt, his commitment to the development of himself and others, his willingness to share and the spirit with which he approaches life have been valuable lessons.

I extend my thanks to my supervisor, Dr Salma Ismail for her encouragement throughout the thesis process. She gave me space to explore my own way while also supporting me in the research journey. I wish to thank Dr Linda Cooper for reading and commenting on my drafts and for helping to present my ideas more clearly. I also wish to thank June Saldahna for the time she took to discuss feminist literature with me and Dr Lucia Thesen for her discussion on the thematic presentation of findings. To other staff members of the Centre for Higher Education and Development (CHED) who were always open to impromptu discussion, I thank you.

I would like to acknowledge the following institutions/foundations for their financial support: University of Cape Town (UCT), National Research Foundation (NRF) and The Harry Crossley Foundation for their financial assistance.

Lastly to my family. To my parents Noellë and Patrick Pottier who have believed in me and have always been supportive of my academic undertakings: thank you for the love and support you have extended, this work is as much mine as it is yours. To my partner Uno and my son Tau thank you for your moral support and for the stimulating and loving environment that you bring to our home.

When even one's own life can sometimes appear mysterious, how can anyone dare to propose anything called the truth about someone else's life? At the same time the reconstruction of another individual destiny produces knowledge not only about him or her but also about a historical period and the conditions of life during that period. Thus we can ultimately learn something about ourselves and about the world we live in.

(Knapé 2010: 17)

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Chapter 1. Introduction

This thesis explores the pedagogy of Mike Abrams, a popular educator working with a range of individuals and organisations in the Western Cape Province. It focuses on his practice over the last ten years (2000 – 2010), against the backdrop of the historical development of his pedagogy in the South African context. Although practised internationally, the term ‘popular education’ was coined, and the pedagogy defined, by Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (1972). Since then many others have described practices of popular education and have theorised the pedagogy (Walters and Manicom 1996, Ismail 2009). Popular education refers to non-formal education practices ‘that aim to challenge injustice and oppression’ (Walters 1998:440), the ultimate goal of which is the development of a critically conscious and socially just society (Weiler 1996). The term is used interchangeably with ‘radical adult education’, ‘liberatory education’, ‘transformative education’ and ‘education for empowerment’ (Walters 1998: 440). As a radical pedagogy popular education is concerned with addressing the root causes of oppressive power relations (Foley 2001). It is concerned with both transforming the structures that maintain oppression as well as with supporting people to become subjects rather than objects of change (Freire 1972).

Reason for the study within a South African context

Popular education has a long history in South Africa and played a vital role in the struggles against apartheid (Mkwatsha 1985, Ismail 2006). It was grounded in ‘People’s Education for People’s Power’ which was consistent with popular education in that ‘it was rooted in the real interests and struggles of ordinary people’, ‘overtly political’ and ‘committed to progressive social and political change’ (von Kotze 2005:12). Furthermore, it was opposed to the state and its racist politics. With the demise of apartheid and the emergence of democracy and a legitimate government, the context for popular education has changed drastically; the need for education that supports the attainment of social justice nevertheless persists. This dynamic is explored below and brings to light the relevance of researching particular instances of popular education practice.

Although many gains have been made since the dismantling of apartheid, the material conditions of many of the poor have remained the same (Desai 2002a). For example, while social spending and social support mechanisms have been extended, these have been undermined by the African National Congress' (ANC) neoliberal Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) programme (von Kotze 2005), political corruption (Lodge, 1998), mismanagement of public funds and a failure to redistribute resources (Desai, Maharaj and Bond 2011). These structural issues have put pressure on communities already torn apart by stresses such as violence, unemployment, crime, poverty and HIV/AIDS (Beinart and Dawson 2010) and have prompted the assertion that a 'decade after democracy the gap has widened between this bright vision of a "rights based" paradise and the grim everyday social, economic and political realities experienced by the majority of South African citizens' (Robins 2008:2). For these reasons, not even ten years into the new democracy the country saw a return to collective protest¹.

In terms of state and civil society relations, Beinart and Dawson (2001) note that since 1994 antagonism has escalated. Notwithstanding this there exists no clear-cut relationship between the state and citizens fighting for their rights as enshrined in the constitution, rather there are varying levels of involvement (Cock 2003, Habib 2003). Popular educators too are negotiating this new terrain and the pedagogic implications of this are manifested in different ways as can be seen in popular educators' reflections on practice (von Kotze 2005, Ismail 2009). One aspect of this is captured by Ismail (2006:47) who, writing particularly of the changing struggles of women in informal settlements, notes that:

The new challenge facing communities in informal settlements as citizens in post-apartheid South Africa is to make an impact on government through formal channels, particularly local government. This challenge is in sharp contrast to apartheid – these communities are now seen as active citizens in pursuit of basic needs.

The impact of fighting for social justice in the context of neoliberal democratic states is captured by Jara (1998, cited in Kane 2001: 225) who notes that to 'move on from a logic based purely on confrontation, protest and demand to a logic base which includes

¹ For examples of specific community struggles post-apartheid refer to Desai (2002b).

dialogue, negotiation and making proposals' is a significant shift'. This confrontation-collaboration dynamic is one aspect of the changed context in which popular education practice is being carried out. On another level changed institutional dynamics have affected popular education provision.

In terms of institutional support for popular education provision, von Kotze (2005) notes that since 1997 this has been undermined. She suggests that the legitimisation of the state has resulted in the collapse of a wide range of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) and support agencies as government was expected to take over many of their welfare functions and that foreign donor support decreased as funds were increasingly channelled through the state. In terms of leadership she suggests that the flight of struggle leaders 'into the ranks of government and the private sector combined with blatant opportunism and corruption changed priorities as new opportunities presented themselves' (von Kotze 2005: 17). Institutional and organisational support for the critical education that happened during apartheid has therefore been drastically reconfigured thereby changing the context for contemporary popular education practice.

Popular educators therefore assert that the move to democracy has required different strategies and understandings for those undertaking radical adult education. This has prompted calls for case studies that might provide insight into how the philosophy of popular education is currently being put into practice (Walters and Manicom 1996). This imperative echoes international sentiment that descriptions of practice are needed to clarify what constitutes radical pedagogy in these times of globalisation, neoliberalism and broadening ideologies (Foley 2001). It is in this context that I wanted to explore how a popular education practice is represented in contemporary South Africa.

Research statement

This study explores the pedagogy of Mike Abrams, a popular educator who has practised popular education in South Africa since the anti-apartheid struggle years.

Study objectives

- To describe and analyse the practitioner's ideology, educational theory and practice.

- To locate the practitioner's pedagogy within his personal background
- To explore links between the practitioner's ideology, theory, and practice and current social justice issues in South Africa.

Brief introduction to the practitioner

This study researches the pedagogy of Mike Abrams², a South African popular educator. His pedagogy as presented in this study should not be viewed as a singular truth but should be seen for what it is: an isolated slice of practice from a single point of view, mine. While limited in this way, it offers an insight into a considered and sustained pedagogy.

Thesis structure

This thesis explores and presents the practitioner's³ pedagogy in the following way. In Chapter Two I present the conceptual framework and introduce the educational theory of popular education and radical pedagogy. While popular education falls within radical pedagogies, its teaching and learning theory and methodology are distinct, as described by Freire and others (Hope and Timmel 1984, Kane 2001). Furthermore, I define these two philosophies separately as popular education provides tools for researching teaching theory and practice while radical pedagogies provide concepts and ways of discussing ideology more specifically (Brookfield 2005) as well as educator activist strategies (Gramsci 1971, Mayo 1999). I then delineate the conceptual boundary of pedagogy as used in this study. I argue that pedagogy requires an exploration of ideology, educational theory and practice and an exploration of the practitioner's strategies of practice.

In Chapter Three I present the research design and explain the research process. I then consider research ethics and issues of validity. This is followed by a description of how evidence was gathered and how this was analysed. I then consider the limitations of the study. Lastly, I explain how the research findings are presented.

In Chapters Four, Five and Six I present and discuss the study findings.

² Mike insisted on being named in the study.

³ I use "the practitioner ('s)" and "the educator ('s)" interchangeably to refer to Mike Abrams.

In Chapter Four I briefly consider the practitioner's ideology over two parts. Firstly I provide a brief background of the educator's history with an emphasis on key aspects that shaped his popular educator identity. This includes a consideration of the personal, political, cultural and economic experiences that influenced him. Secondly I discuss and analyse key themes that arose during the exploration of the practitioner's ideology. In discussing and analysing the findings I draw on feminist critiques of traditional popular education and radical educators' discussions of ideology more generally as presented in Chapter Two.

In Chapter Five I present and discuss the findings of the educator's theory and practice. In order to do this I draw on popular education theory and more specifically feminist reflections on practice.

Chapter Six is the last findings and analyses chapter; it focuses on the current moment. I first present a description of how the educator views the current moment and then discuss the strategies he employs in working in this named context. These are presented in the light of discussions of sites for popular education and counter hegemonic education more broadly, and of challenges posed by the current context that pertains to popular educators.

In the final chapter I reflect on the research findings and the research process. I then pose several questions for future research.

Chapter 2. Conceptual framework

This section presents the conceptual framework within which I undertook this investigation. Firstly I introduce popular education, its aims, principles and educational theory. I then present feminist critiques of traditional popular education and reflections on practice that have emerged, relevant to the practice explored in this study. I then delineate how pedagogy is conceptualised. Lastly I explain how the literature is incorporated into this study.

Popular education

In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1972), Freire outlines a pedagogy of liberation based on his experiences as a popular educator in Brazil during the 1960s. The principles discussed therein form the basis of popular education. I now present the aims and guiding principles of the pedagogy and the educational theory underpinning it.

Aims

The aims of popular education are the development of critical consciousness and humanization (Freire 1972) which are to result in the development of a just social order (Weiler 1996). The act of developing critical consciousness is termed conscientisation, a process in which learners reflect critically on their experiences, ideas and beliefs, situating these historically (Freire and Macedo 1995) and then moving into a broader structural analysis. The process is therefore explained as happening in concentric circles ‘beginning with the learners themselves and then moving to locate the learners within gradually widening contexts’ (Hughes 1996:103). In turn critical consciousness refers to an ever evolving state in which one increasingly learns to ‘perceive social, political and economic contradictions, and to take action against oppressive elements of reality’ (Freire 1972: 15). Related to this, humanization is the process through which people move from being dual beings ‘“housing” the oppressors within themselves’ (Freire 1972: 67) to becoming unexploited and whole (Hughes 1996:103). This means that people must challenge internalized oppression – the ‘internalized stereotypes, myths, feelings and beliefs which numb the agency of individuals’ (Heng 1996: 204) – as part of their own

empowerment. The centrality of critical consciousness and humanization therefore places agency and personal change as central in the pedagogy.

While popular education has this individual dimension, Freire (1972:58) notes that the ‘pursuit of full humanity, however, cannot be carried out in isolation or individualism, but only in fellowship and solidarity’.

These aims are underpinned by several principles.

Principles and educational theory

The principles underpinning popular education also form the educational theory of the pedagogy. I draw on both traditional popular education pedagogy and feminist critiques and reflections on practice to describe the theory. The principles are interlinked and are usefully described through the key pedagogic technique of dialogue.

Firstly, dialogue is based on *democratic relations* between teachers and learners while also being the medium for developing such relationships. Popular education is therefore a pursuit in which both teachers and students⁴ are subjects of the educational process and accordingly strive for a deeper understanding of reality together (Freire and Macedo 1995). While hierarchical relations are considered as impediments to learning and by extension to humanization, Freire (in Freire and Macedo 1995: 378) notes that the educator must not relinquish his or her ‘pedagogic, political and epistemological task’.

A second principle is that the content and direction of education must be *based on the lives of learners* through an engagement with people's lived realities, their 'thematic universe' (Freire 1972:69). The thematic universe refers to ‘the reality which mediates men and the perception of that reality held by educators and people’ (Freire 1972:69). The process of identifying the generative themes that make up people's thematic universe should be ‘a common striving towards an awareness of reality and self, thus making it a starting point for the educational process or cultural action of a liberating character’ (Freire 1972: 79) for both educator and participants. It is important to note that if the educator is to focus on the issues raised by learners and facilitate their critical reflection

⁴ I refer to participants and learners rather than students in this thesis to avoid confusion as the one group that Mike works with are teachers themselves and have their own students.

on this he or she must have gone 'through a period of consciousness raising' whereby they reflect on their own experiences and understandings of oppressive relations (Walters 1996:34). Ismail's (2006: 38, 39) research illustrates that the educator must also 'constantly evaluate his or her own thinking' and remain 'conscious of the role that ideology plays in his or her work' as well as to constantly evaluate his or her intentions and ability to allow ownership of the process to others. Basing education on the lives of the learners therefore requires the educator to undergo constant self-reflection so as to facilitate the learners' critical reflection on their beliefs, ideas and experiences.

This leads to a third principle, which is that education is to be based on a *problem-posing approach* (Freire 1972). At root dialogue is a problem-posing method whereby 'participants are encouraged to problematize established knowledge and their own empirical experience; both are to be researched' (Fischer 2005:125). Established knowledge can relate to knowledge that maintains internal as well as external oppression (Fischer 2005). With problematization as its mode and conscientisation as its aim dialogue involves the objectification of experience with a view to deconstructing this so as to understand how the systems of oppression are maintained.

In order to facilitate this learner-centred and problem-solving approach several tasks can be discerned: to foster hope and break through apathy (Freire 1994), to facilitate dialogue and critical reflection (Freire and Macedo, 1995), to balance spontaneity and directiveness (Walters 1996: 19), to create non-judgemental democratic spaces for engagement and to exercise creativity in the process of engaging in these tasks. Educators thus need to: learn about the 'culture and community which partly constitutes the social location of the learner' (Mayo 1999:66); develop constant knowledge of self so as to facilitate the development of others (Walters 1996); and undertake critical appraisal of their own practice (Freire and Macedo 1995). In addition, according to Freire and Macedo (1987) educators need to constantly appraise the themes of the times in which they are working. The educator therefore comes to the engagement with particular knowledge, ideas and desires. Freire notes that as the educator's role as facilitator is not impartial, he or she must make his or her ideology explicit so that this does not pass surreptitiously into the educational intervention, but is laid open for engagement and critique as part of dialogue (Freire and Macedo 1995). The problem-solving nature of popular education therefore requires all involved to be active subjects and also illustrates

the dynamic and process-driven nature of popular education work. This is manifest in a fourth principle.

Popular education is a form of *praxis*. Praxis refers to reflection on actions taken and actions based on considered reflection (Freire 1972). Without this relation between action and reflection, as both the practice of the educator and participants, transformation and humanization will not occur. What constitutes action is debated in popular education. As previously mentioned action must include collective action, where popular education forms part of a broader political project (Weiler 1996). Feminist popular educators however argue that greater emphasis should be placed on personal empowerment and assert that without this focus on the individual, collective emancipation will not be forthcoming.

Lastly, and underpinning the principles presented above, education must be a *practice of love*. Freire (1972:62) states that:

Dialogue cannot exist however in the absence of a profound love for the world and for men. The naming of the world, which is an act of creation and re-creation, is not possible if it is not infused with love ... As an act of bravery love cannot be sentimental; as an act of freedom, it must not serve as a pretext for manipulation. It must generate other acts of freedom; otherwise, it is not love.

This elucidates the strong humanism of the pedagogy. An important aspect of the quote above is that education as an act of love should 'generate other acts of freedom'. Rather than stifle autonomy and self-belief the pedagogy is one of empowerment. Reflecting on her own work as an educator Cadman (2008:11) notes that love can be manifest in educational practice through supporting connectivity, warmth, generosity and 'being conducive to peace-giving'.

Feminist critiques and reflections on practice

While feminist popular educators maintained a consistency with the principles presented above, they also faced a number of challenges in attempting to implement traditional popular pedagogy and thus have developed a feminist popular pedagogy. Feminists key critiques as summarised by Weiler (1996) are based on the following: the abstract nature

of the theorizing which allows a certain homogenization of the oppressed and therefore excludes different experiences of oppression⁵ and how women exercise agency; the suggestion of a single state of humanization, which makes little space for different visions and truths to co-exist and the lack of theorization of the educator's role in her own and others' development in the light of her subjectivity. In addition Nadeau (1996:43) suggests that traditional pedagogy emphasises a structural analysis and a 'masculinist rationalist' focus which does not provide the 'conceptual tools or a framework for examining the complex realities of women's daily lives'.

In order to address these issues they offer a feminist popular pedagogy based on a recognition of difference between women 'in terms of race, class, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation' (Walters and Manicom 1996: 17) and in terms of the different levels of authority between educators and participants (Weiler 1996). In turn they suggest a greater emphasis on women's individual lives in an attempt to understand daily complexity as part of the process of women's empowerment collectively (Nadeau 1996:43). Linked to this concern with the micro context and reaching people 'at the level of daily life' (Nadeau 1996:59), feminist popular educators assert the importance of alternative forms of knowledge, rather than that which is based on rational thought alone⁶. While dialogue still plays a critical role, feminist popular educators question the possibility of critical reflection without an embodied approach. They advocate for an incorporation of emotions, feelings and the physical body into the educative process (Walters 1996).

Feminist popular educators draw on different theories in exploring the micro-context. For example, Nadeau draws on Augusto Boal's concept of 'cops in the head' (in Nadeau 1996: 53) to explore how power is played out on the micro-level. Drawing on this, she suggests that to 'counter internalized oppression or dominance, we must first look to daily life and uncover how these mechanisms operate there' (Nadeau 1996: 53). She further suggests that this can be undertaken through drawing on methods that 'integrate the emotional, spiritual and mental dimensions' of people's lives (Nadeau 1996: 53). This concern with

⁵ Freire responded to feminist critiques and continued to develop his pedagogy passed *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. See for example Schugurensky (1998) and Roberts (2003).

⁶ Freire did recognize the importance of emotion in transformative education. Hope and Timmel (1984:14) note that one aspect of his contribution to transformative education is the recognition of 'the direct link between emotion and the motivation to act'.

the micro-level has an impact on feminist popular educators' views of what constitutes social action and social change.

Feminist popular educators challenge traditional notions of politics as that which occur on a macro-level and related to structural issues and assert personal space – as that encounter between two human beings (Casey 1993) – as political space. For example, in research of the lives and work of women educator activists, Casey (1993: 158) asks ‘What constitutes the political? What are its boundaries?’ In answering her own question she draws on Gramsci who states that ‘everything is political’ (Gramsci 1980: 357, in Casey 1993: 158) not just the state or its institutions but our very identities: how we are in the world. Political action and social change in feminist popular education pedagogy therefore

...involves a transformation of the whole person and of the collective at the level of the body and spirit. It is this combining of feeling and rationality, of personal and political realities, of private and public, of the household economy and the market economy that makes popular education feminist (Nadeau 1996: 59).

In summary, reflections of feminist popular educator's practice and theory offer a number of useful insights for this thesis. At root this pedagogy is concerned with gender as one of the key mechanisms through which power is exerted. While these educators provide progressive insights, such as the need to recognize difference and the situated nature of oppression, the pedagogy maintains the liberation of women as a central goal.

Defining pedagogy in this study

In order to investigate and hence conceptualize pedagogy I think it necessary to delineate the concept of 'pedagogy' I employ. Popular education pedagogy is characterized by an agenda of transformation and social justice. This is underpinned by a political and dialectical educational theory. Its political agenda is reflected in the central assertion that no education is neutral and the centrality of democratizing relationships (Freire and Macedo 1995) for example, between students and teachers and within society more broadly. It is dialectical in that knowledge production is a joint process (in which the teacher is also a learner), in that the theory and practice is responsive to the context in

which it unfolds (Kane 2001) and owing to the experiential nature of learning and teaching (Ismail 2006).

Given these characteristics I have worked from an understanding of pedagogy which includes the practitioner's ideology, popular education theory and practice and how the educator understands and intervenes in the contemporary context (comprising the activist strategies that the practitioner employs). In the next section I elaborate further on why these dimensions fall within the realm of pedagogy and as part of this introduce the study's key concepts.

Exploring ideology

Central to popular education is the underlying position of a critical orientation to power. The centrality of power as delineated by Freire is underpinned by Gramsci's (1972:12) notion of hegemony: 'the "spontaneous" consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group'. Hegemony in turn is maintained by ideology, the 'broadly accepted set of values, beliefs, myths, explanations, and justifications that appear self-evidently true, empirically accurate, personally relevant, and morally desirable to a majority of the populace' (Brookfield 2005:41). However, many note that hegemony is continuously contested: it is a struggle between dominant and insurgent ideologies, what Gramsci called 'hegemonic struggle' (Foley 1999:15). As part of the long term aims of popular education – of transformation and the attainment of social justice – there is therefore a need to resist hegemony through ideology critique and the development of insurgent ideologies and practices (Foley 1999). This process of coming to an awareness of how oppression is maintained and acting on this – conscientisation – is the key role of the popular educator.

Many note that if educators are meant to facilitate the development of critical consciousness in others then they must have a preconceived notion of what constitutes this. Indeed as Kane (2005: 33) states, the only way the educator will recognize 'critical consciousness is through their own particular ideological construction of what this actually means'. Understanding this key aspect of practice therefore requires a broader understanding of the practitioner's ideological frame.

The definition of ideology presented above portrays ideology as a subconscious attribute which through our everyday actions and thoughts ‘support the established order’ (Brookfield 2005:67). If, however, insurgent ideologies develop out of ideology critique, the above value laden definition is not useful in terms of understanding the ideology of those whose core function it is to contest thoughts and actions that support the status quo. Instead, for this study I draw on a more 'neutral' definition of ideology: ‘the particular set of ideas and beliefs – political, cultural, philosophical – held by a group (or individual) and used to interpret reality’ (Kane 2001:143) and the ‘various ways in which social meaning and structures are “produced, challenged, reproduced and transformed” in both individual consciousness and social practices and relationships’ (Foley 1999:14).

While popular education unequivocally falls to the left of the political spectrum (Kane 2001) as a radical pedagogy it commands a critical orientation to ideology. Indeed as ‘radical education and learning can take us as speedily in the direction of reaction as revolution’ (Foley 2001:72) there needs to be a certain progressive orientation which is about being ‘concerned to challenge inequality, exclusion and discrimination and to be part of the broader struggle for democracy and social justice’ (Crowther, Galloway and Martin 2005:2). While the educator’s definition of critical consciousness gives an insight into the educator's ideology, this also manifests in the concept of really useful knowledge. Crowther (2006:134) describes this concept as both personal and political; encompassing all that is required to ‘enlighten’ learners so that they can ‘understand the world in terms of their own experience’ and ‘recognize the potential to act effectively and collectively to change it’.

In order to understand Mike's ideological orientation I explored his background, drew on the concepts of critical consciousness and really useful knowledge and considered discussions of ideology from a radical adult education perspective. More generally I attempted to allow this to surface through the interview process.

When researching Mike's background I considered the development of his popular educator identity in terms of his defining experiences and key lessons learnt. In a cross case study of educator activists Marshal and Anderson (2009:16) note the importance of understanding the development of an educator’s activist identity because an ‘individual's attitudes, commitments, beliefs, and behaviours [influence] his or her activist decisions’.

In exploring Mike's identity I drew on Marshall and Anderson's (2009: 17) definition of identity as 'a person's self-concept at a particular time, within a given context, and subject to on-going construction and modification through various processes and experiences'.

Exploring theory and practice

The praxis orientated and dialectical nature of popular education rejects the notion of unchanging or static educational practice. As such the practice of an educator in one context at one time may be differently construed by that same practitioner at a later period under different conditions.

Furthermore, while popular education is process driven, it is also directive (Freire and Macedo 1995). As such the practice seems to hold an inherent contradiction: it attempts to empower others to develop a critical consciousness, but this is within the context of a predefined notion of what constitutes this (that is through the practitioner's ideological lens). This contradiction is addressed (or not) in the practitioner's teaching theory and practice. An investigation of educational theory and practice therefore will also give an insight into how the practitioner's ideology manifests itself.

Researching educator activist strategies

A political commitment and activism are inherent in popular education practice. As such, it requires strategies that go beyond those related specifically to overt teaching and learning contexts. Walters (1996: 33) suggests however that while 'political activism is assumed in both Freire's work and the literature on feminist pedagogy, there is little discussion on what this might entail or what theories of social transformation underlie particular forms of social action'. This is especially important given the context specific nature of popular education (Ireland 1996).

In discussing the current context within which adult educators operate Merriam, Courtenay and Cervero (2006: 488) ask whether 'there is room in the globalization community for education that offers (but also transcends) skills development by addressing social justice and personal enrichment needs?' Two questions that arise from

this, as related to investigating the practitioner's activist strategies, is what is the nature of this 'room' and how does he or she operate within it?

In order to explore how the educator intervenes in the current context I drew on Freire's (1972) notion of naming reality, I then conceptualised sites for popular education practice and lastly I discussed the educator's role as a leader and organiser as encapsulated in Gramsci's (1971) discussion of intellectuals.

Naming the current moment

How the practitioner understands and interprets the economic, political, environmental and cultural issues shaping society – encapsulated in Freire's concept of naming the moment – and hence influential to his or her practice is important for two reasons. In one sense naming the current moment, through praxis, is an action in itself (Freire 1972). In another sense he notes that the central aspect of intervening in a social situation in a critically conscious way is that of naming the reality in which one wishes to intervene. For the popular educator this naming should pose the world as a problem rather than a 'fixed entity as something given – something to which men, as mere spectators must adapt' (Freire 1972: 109). This naming requires intervention, the action of which requires a new naming (Freire 1972). To intervene thus in this named context requires decisions as to how, where, and with whom to engage.

Strategy and sites of practice

While popular education pedagogy is contextual, sites for intervention can still be thought of through Gramsci's theory of 'war of position': a process of 'wide ranging social organisation and cultural influence' (Mayo 1999:38). Mayo (1999: 26), in discussing Freire and Gramsci's ideas of transformative adult education and spaces for intervention, suggests that 'forms of power ... should be regarded as complex sets of social relations' and that 'one should challenge the power structures by attempting to change some of the social relations that give rise to it'. He further suggests that an 'effective strategy of counter-hegemonic education should therefore involve as wide a range of social practices as possible' and that this occurs both 'tactically inside and strategically outside the system' (Mayo 1999:26).

While there is general consensus that popular education work needs to occur in different sites, including working in the system and with compliant organizations, the ever present possibility of co-option nevertheless exists (Kane 2001). Mayo (1999) notes that it is difficult working within organizations where one must compromise but suggests that the subversion of the practitioner's ideology may also serve as a tactic so as to engage in educational work. In this context the recognition of difference and the conscious integration of this into programmes arise as important tasks (Walters 1996). In addition the practitioner's continual reflection on his or her practice is important to guard against his or her work losing its critical dimension.

Popular educator as leader/intellectual

The popular educator's role as a leader can be considered through Gramsci's (1971:10) conceptualization of intellectuals as those who actively participate in daily life as 'constructors, organizers and permanent persuaders'. In his theorization of intellectuals Gramsci (1971:15) makes a 'distinction between intellectuals as an organic category of every fundamental social group and intellectuals as a traditional category'. Gramsci's conceptualization of traditional intellectuals in terms of popular educators is somewhat problematic however in that:

Gramsci acknowledged a certain superiority of the intellectual in their educational role and made a distinction between their knowledge and the 'common sense' beliefs of the working class (folklore), a 'common sense' that would be brought to 'good sense' by the organic intellectuals in their role as teachers (Ismail 2006: 40)

While Freire did not reject the authority of the educator he held as central the principle of equality, in terms of the knowledge that different groups bring to the educative process and in terms of the power relations based on class difference between educators and students. Supporting this Ismail (2006:38) notes that:

The way most popular educators have managed power relationships between themselves and learners is by sharing their knowledge with learners who apply it to their situation in a process which does not deny inequality of knowledge but which is based on cooperative and democratic principles of power.

Furthermore drawing on Gramsci she states that ‘Adult educators who engaged in counterhegemonic activity are, according to Gramsci, the organic intellectuals who will lead the oppressed group to power.’ (Ismail 2006:26).

Related to this however, in Mayo's (1999: 119) reflection on the educator committing class suicide he notes that ‘barriers would persist’ between the educator and learner. This has ramifications in terms of the adult educator as organic intellectual, in that he or she can never fully grasp the lived reality of an oppressed group or act as their representative. As educators therefore they must be involved in the development of a group of intellectuals from the oppressed group who take on this function.

This section has detailed the conceptual frame within which this study was undertaken. I now present the research design and methodologies employed in conducting it.

University of Cape Town

Chapter 3. Research design and methodology

In order to explore pedagogy I undertook qualitative, interpretive case study. Qualitative study is based on the need ‘to describe life-worlds ‘from the inside out’ from the point of view of the people who participate’ (Flick, Kardoff and Steinke 2004: 3). This type of research involves the use of a spectrum of methods, which are drawn upon based on their appropriateness in answering the study question (Flick et al. 2004). Rather than the methods being based only on what is observable, as an interpretivist study they must also seek to understand what meaning is ascribed by actors to their social practices. Interpretivist epistemology ‘assumes that all human action is meaningful and hence has to be interpreted and understood within the context of social practices’ (Usher 1998: 18). As this position asserts that all human practice involves different levels of interpretation this is also extended to the researcher and his or her interpretation of the meaning given to events by research participants (Usher 1998). In this understanding all knowledge generated is therefore ‘perspective-bound and partial’ (Usher 1998: 19). The case study developed in this thesis is framed by this epistemological position.

In this section I present the research design and methodology used to explore and understand pedagogy. I start by presenting the research design. This is followed by a description of the research process, a consideration of ethical issues and a discussion regarding the validity of the data. I then discuss the gathering of the data, data analysis and the limitations of the study. Lastly I describe how the findings are presented.

Research design

Case study research

According to Yin (2003:13) case study research affords a possibility to investigate ‘contemporary phenomena within its real life context especially where the boundaries between phenomena and context are not clearly evident. In addition the methodology permits a consideration of personal background and hence political history. The research problem outlined thus far points to the applicability of a case study.

Related to the study of popular education specifically, Walters and Manicom (1996: 7) note that case studies afford ‘insights, critical analyses, concrete examples and general

principles of transformative education’ which hopefully will ‘stimulate ideas for approaching local education work in different ways’. They note that these should not be turned into models of practice however; as Kane (2001:215) articulates ‘what constitutes popular education is localised rather than national’. Usefully therefore, while case study research cannot provide statistical generalisation it can provide analytical generalisation (Yin 1994).

Description of the case

The subject of this study is a popular educator and the object of the investigation was his pedagogy as defined in Chapter Two. I focused on exploring the last ten years of his practice, which provided insight into how it had been affected by socio-political and cultural forces. While the focus was on this period, the study also had an historical dimension, comprising of an investigation into his personal history, in order to contextualize his contemporary practice.

The reasons that this study focused on one practitioner were both practical and theoretical. In terms of practical reasons I had difficulty early on in the research identifying and securing the involvement of a second practitioner. More generally I did not have the time or financial resources necessary to undertake a larger investigation. On a theoretical level, as this study was concerned with analytical rather than statistical generalization (Yin 1994), exploring the practice of one educator did not lessen the value of the research.

In terms of selection criteria, educators who had the following characteristics were considered: had been activists and were practising popular education for over 15 years; considered themselves popular educators and displayed commitment to popular education pedagogy; and practised in the Western Cape.

Research methods used

In order to research the educator’s pedagogy I made use of interview, observation and documentary evidence.

Interviews

Interviews are particularly useful in developing ‘intensive case studies of individuals’ (Merriam 1991:71). They provide information on ‘feelings thoughts and intentions’ as well as past events that may ‘preclude the presence of an observer’ (Patton 1980:196, in Merriam 1991:72). Interviews therefore provide a way of understanding an individual’s actions and the motivation behind these (Bollens and Marshall 1973).

In discussing the limitations of interviews, researchers note that the personal perspective that is the strength of interviews is also their weakness (Bollens and Marshall 1973). This subjectivity influences not only the interviewee but also how the interviewer decodes what is shared (Marshall and Rossman 2011).

Observations

Observations support interviews in that they provide an opportunity for researchers to gather information concerning events, kinds of behaviour and artefacts in the social setting (Marshall and Rossman 2011). In particular, observations of educative interventions give insight into social interactions, how participants engage with exercises, course materials and other pedagogic devices. It is important to note that the researcher’s emotions may also count as data (Callahan 2004).

One of the limitations of this method is the subjectivity of the researcher in the observation process and the potential bias that may ensue (Yin 1984:87). This may be offset by observations being cross-checked with other data sources (Neuman 1997). Another limitation is the challenge of competing demands between the observer and participant role (Yin 1984).

Documents

Documentary analysis provides supplementary evidence in case study research and is not subject to the limitations identified above in that it is not influenced by the researcher (that is the researcher does not alter what is being studied by her presence). In particular documents are ‘good sources for qualitative case studies because they can ground an investigation in the context of the problem being investigated’ (Merriam 1991:109).

These however must be assessed in terms of their relevance to the research question and in terms of their authenticity and accuracy (Merriam 1991).

Research Process

Making contact with, selecting and securing participation

I took a substantial amount of time defining my research question, and during this time on different occasions two people active in the field of adult and social justice education suggested that I 'speak to Mike'. When I did so I found Mike's ideas very interesting. On further discussion with colleagues I learnt that Mike more than met my study criteria both in terms of how long he had been practising popular education as well as in his commitment to supporting popular education. In one sense he represented an ideal subject, in another, owing to his identity as a white male, he was an unusual subject given South Africa's history of apartheid and the historical privilege bestowed upon such individuals which he chose to relinquish through his activism.

It was for the reasons above as well as the ease with which he shared his ideas that motivated me to focus on his work. When asked to be one of two practitioners involved in this research, he agreed (Appendix 1). For a number of reasons however I was not able to enlist a second practitioner, but nevertheless Mike was still willing to participate.

Negotiating access for the observations

Mike sought permission from two organisations with which he worked for me to observe some workshops. Once permission was granted I was given dates on which I could attend certain workshops. On these occasions Mike introduced me to the participants, explaining that I was there to observe and reflect on his practice: therefore I did not seek permission from the workshop participants.

Ethical considerations

Working with Mike

I felt I was given a great opportunity to engage with and to learn about the practice of a dedicated popular educator. From the outset I must therefore lay claim to a certain level of partiality which had implications for how I negotiated objectivity, how I conceptualised reciprocity, and how I took into account the power dynamics that arose from my own and the research participant's position. These dynamics were compounded by the fact that Mike wished to be named in the study.

I wish to consider three issues in which the problems mentioned above and my response to them can be illuminated. These include: 'interviewing up?', 'removing' popular education out of a collective practice and research as exploitation.

'Interviewing up'?

On the face of it the researcher/researched dynamic would seem to have been skewed towards the research subject: Mike is a white male, both older as well as more experienced in the field of study than I, a coloured female student, approximately 20 years his junior. Having read literature on 'interviewing up' in educational research (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007) however, I could not relate to the issues being raised therein. Unlike Cohen et al.'s (2007) suggestion that those in more powerful positions tend to exert a disproportionate amount of control during the research process, my experience was that of feeling comfortable to ask questions, of having all my questions answered and of not feeling that I had lost control of the research process. I therefore question whether the notion of 'researching up' had any impact on my research.

Contrary to this, as a result of Mike's commitment to my research process he became vulnerable to misrepresentation and other such pitfalls of unethical research practices (Pendlebury and Enslin 2001). As a result, a central concern of mine was to represent Mike's pedagogy in an accurate and fair way. One way in which this manifested was in a preoccupation I experienced in maintaining his 'voice' in the writing up. I initially attempted to do this by including extensive quotes from the interviews; this proved impractical however and I was forced to scale down. Nevertheless I have still included

long quotes where I felt that a shorter extract or paraphrasing would not capture what he said sufficiently⁷.

With regard to misrepresentation, during the research process Mike and I discussed truth and representation several times. What was agreed on from our initial meeting was that I would hold the power in the research in terms of making the final judgements and presenting these in the report; this I did guided by considerations of rights to privacy and the possible misuse of information.

Removing popular education out of a collective context

This study aimed to describe an individual practice and therefore inevitably abstracted it from its collective context. Researching radical pedagogy in this way thus raised certain ethical concerns including: how to guard against the pedagogy being misrepresented and misunderstood as well as how to acknowledge the many individuals who shaped that pedagogy. In researching Mike's background as well as his pedagogy more broadly I found that he made many references to those with whom he worked and learnt from and thus their voices have also entered into the thesis. In this regard I have attempted to acknowledge those whom Mike recognized as having contributed to his pedagogy, for example, Dezz van Niekerk gave permission to use his name. Owing to the word limit however, I was forced to leave out some of the information imparted during interviews and informal discussions and hence individuals mentioned. The question therefore remains whether I have successfully reflected the social dimension of his practice. This individualisation of a collective practice also raises issues of validity which I consider later.

Research as exploitation

Patai (1991:139) notes that the possibility of exploitation is 'built into almost all research projects with human beings'. While I cannot deny my personal motives in undertaking this research my hope was that it would serve as a useful text for practitioners in the field of social justice education or others interested in pursuing such a path. In terms of direct benefits to Mike as well as the two organisations who hosted me, I have also promised to hand final copies of the thesis to them for their records.

⁷ My interjections are signalled as follows: (L:).

Working with the two organisations

The co-ordinators of the two respective organisations not only gave me permission to observe the workshops but also preferred that their organisations be named in the thesis; as permission was not sought to identify workshop participants they have been given pseudonyms. In terms of reciprocity I undertook to give each organisation a copy of my workshop observations, which I have done. I intend giving them a final copy of the thesis as was agreed upon at the beginning.

Validity

I have interpreted validity to mean the truthfulness and credibility of an account (Marshall and Rossman 2011:40). In attempting to provide a valid account I have used different research tools to acquire information and to check my understanding through cross checks (triangulation).

In terms of abstracting practice from a collective context I presented my observations and reflections of the workshops to Mike and the organisations. I also handed transcripts of interviews to Mike for comment. In doing this I provided opportunities for Mike and the organisations to comment on my interpretations.

In terms of internal validity, there are multiple realities and identities in which people partake and there is no 'God's eye view' which the researcher can capture (Putnam 1990 cited in Maxwell 1992: 283). The researcher's role rather is to present 'a more or less honest rendering of how informants actually view themselves and their experiences' (Taylor and Bogdan 1984:98 in Merriam 1991: 168). As discussed in the 'Ethics' section above I recognize that what I present is my view of what I found. Nevertheless, in both the data collection and analyses phases I have attempted to be diligent and ethical in researching and presenting the findings. As such I maintain that the findings, analysis and discussion on the next few pages are valid accounts.

Gathering evidence

In order to develop a case study of pedagogy I undertook formal interviews, workshop observations and document analysis (see field work schedule in Appendix 2). I also

engaged in informal discussions with Mike and workshop participants. In this section I present the interview and observation protocols as well as the documents I consulted and the data that these sources yielded.

Interviews

Four interviews were held over the period of 13th July 2009 – 3rd February 2010. All but the second interview (an hour and a half) were over two hours in duration. The interviews were interleaved with the observations and document reading and hence the questions asked were influenced by these.

The particular focus of this study necessitated the use of open-ended questions and semi-structured interviews. These provided enough structure to investigate ‘pre-determined subjects of conversation’ while being flexible enough to ‘maximize the scope of the topics’ and to give Mike ‘an opportunity to invoke points of view that had not been anticipated’ (Hopf 2004:205). Therefore while each interview had a schedule I attempted to leave room for issues important to the practitioner to surface. In terms of the latter, through following the course of discussion that arose, I attempted to understand Mike’s thoughts, understandings, feelings and theories and to learn about events that shaped and constituted his pedagogy. I now consider each of the interviews.

The first interview with Mike was largely biographical. In it I attempted: to understand the development of his activist as well as his educator identity and to understand how his ideology or world view developed. This interview was therefore about understanding his history as a basis for understanding his current practice (see Appendix 3).

The first half of the second interview involved understanding the context of a workshop I had observed and of his engagement with this group. Through discussions related to this his approaches to and understanding of learning and teaching were explored. During this interview I also sought information on the different interventions in which he is currently involved. As part of what he shared during these discussions his activist strategy began to develop as another theme (see Appendix 4).

The third interview covered a range of topics (see Appendix 5). These included understanding Mike’s activist strategies and teaching approaches in community

development interventions; how he describes the ‘current moment’; and the values that underpin his work. Other issues that arose were related to: intellectuals, living and working within a capitalist context and popular education.

I began the fourth interview by clarifying issues that had been brought up previously, the rest of the time we discussed issues of governance, social change and particular aspects of his practice (see Appendix 6).

Observations

I undertook three observations between July 2009 and August 2009, each of these being guided by a set of questions (Appendix 7). These centred on Mike’s technique, what was discussed in the workshops, power in the classroom and the adult education principles that were evident in the interaction. During this time I assumed the role of an observer as participant (Neuman 1997). The members of the groups were thus aware of my being a researcher and I had limited contact with them; my role as a participant in the group was secondary to that of ‘information gatherer’ (Merriam 1991: 93). While I engaged in group activities and provided some support to the facilitators I remained an outsider. I briefly describe the observation processes and the three workshops I attended below.

Observation Processes

The Community Action towards a Safer Environment (CASE) workshop was about two hours long and each of the c’Dabra workshop observations about five hours long. All the field notes were written up the day after (see Appendix 8 for a sample). After this I attempted to answer the questions that guided my observations. Writing the reflection reports for the two organisations (Appendix 9 and 10) helped me to clarify further what I had learnt about Mike’s practice.

Introduction to CASE Workshop

CASE is based in the suburb of Hanover Park (Appendix 11) on the Cape Flats. Its core work is community development with a focus on ‘dealing with the problems related to community violence in a holistic way’ (CASE n.d.). The Non-Profit Organisation (NPO) runs a training and personal development programme and a community programme; it also has an on-going campaign against violence in the community.

The workshop I observed was a creative session; it formed part of the men's circle developed in 2008⁸. As part of the men's circle it is a space where men get support from each other 'not in the sense of patriarchy but rather equality' (interview 1) and explore notions of manhood (CASE n.d.). The need for these creative sessions was identified by the men themselves (discussed further in Chapter Five). In attendance were sixteen coloured men and one African national – chaperoned by a woman.

Introduction to c'Dabra Workshop

c'Dabra is a Public Benefit Organisation (PBO) located in the upmarket area of Fresnaye that services teachers from around the Western Cape. c'Dabra's two main focus areas are educator development and community-based peace building (c'Dabra n.d.).

The workshops were one day long, with different participants – all from schools in Langa (Appendix 12) – attending each day. Over the two days there was an average of ten participants, mostly black African women. The aim was to develop reflective practice through improving teacher's understanding of the action reflection cycle and learning about and beginning the process of journaling (see notes handed out at the c'Dabra workshops Appendix 13). The teachers were also envisioned as candidates for joining the c'Dabra community – composed of staff and parents on the school governing bodies – to address the challenges they were facing in schools.

Documentation

During the course of the study I read four documents written by Mike in collaboration with a colleague(s): *Ekitchini* (Ekitchini Collective, circa 1988), *Circle Song* (Abrams and Motsemme 1999), *Cooking up Community* (Fine and Abrams 2003) and *Men Cry bullets: reflections on the internal exile of men in South Africa* (Hands-On-Collective n.d.), a document presented at an Institute for Justice and Reconciliation Training (IJR) workshop. In terms of the event at IJR I also received a background document to one of the round table discussions detailing the key questions framing the workshop that Hands-On-Collective (Hands-On) was to facilitate and readings related to this, which I also drew on (IJR 2009). In addition I read extracts from Mike's Master's thesis entitled: *Ikitchini*:

⁸ I refer to this group as the 'men's group'.

The Hidden Side of Women's Labour (Abrams 1988). A brief description of each of these documents can be found in Appendix 14.

Analysis

All interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed by me. I initially sorted the findings in the transcripts into pre-established themes that I had developed from the literature, namely: social justice engagements⁹, ideology, ideas on popular education, teaching and learning, personal history and macro-context. Some of these themes overlapped however and after some further sorting the following categories evolved: ideology, 'pedagogy' (about learning and teaching and his discussion of popular education more specifically), micro and macro context and his learning and employment. This last group was later reorganised to form either: his background, how he named the current moment, or the activist strategies he employed within this named context. I also had an 'other' category for important information that did not fit into, or fitted into more than, one category. I then grouped all the categories into themes. The final themes therefore were made up of a mixture of pre-existing categories and redefined categories that surfaced during the fieldwork.

The observations were sorted in terms of what I had found out in the interviews. I looked for points of confirmation and contradiction and attempted to be alert to other aspects of Mike's practice that had not arisen during our discussions.

In terms of document analysis, I first read these for a general understanding, making notes as I went along. During and after the interviews I revisited these documents, looking for instances of contradiction or confirmation of what the practitioner had said. I also tried to read with an open mind to allow issues not yet identified to surface. In some cases I asked questions based on what I had read. I largely focussed my attention on the reflection document presented at the IJR round table and on *Cooking up Community*.

Through these processes of sorting and cross-checking the overarching themes that emerged were: ideology; educational theory and practice; and how the practitioner names and strategizes within this named context.

⁹ This included his activist experiences, role as an organiser, ideas on social movements, current activism and activist strategies.

Limitations

A limitation of this thesis is that I am not a popular educator and so did not undertake this research with an understanding developed through practice but rather through formal study. However this thesis was based on exploration, not on evaluation, and I have attempted to provide ample evidence for the claims made, both in text and in the appendices.

A second limitation is that I did not witness the practitioner's use of drama which he had noted was a key aspect of his practice and which would have provided further insights into his pedagogy. I did however observe the dynamic way that he drew on play, physically illustrating a situation and engaging in other embodied processes of learning and teaching.

Presentation of the findings

The findings of the thesis have been presented thematically in accordance with the three overarching themes as explained above. Although these themes overlap each deals with distinct aspects of pedagogy and therefore draws on different sets of theory, for example that which can be used to analyse educational methods versus that which deals with activist strategies. As such, each of the themes has formed a separate chapter in which I both present and analyse the research findings. The literature presented in Chapter Two is therefore discussed in Chapters Four, Five and Six.

Chapter 4. Ideology

Chapter Four presents my findings regarding the ideology underpinning Mike's practice. Firstly I present Mike's background as a way to understand the development of his popular educator identity. Out of the key experiences that Mike signalled as being intense periods of learning for him or as formative experiences, I have included those most directly related to an understanding of his identity as a way of shedding light on his ideology. Secondly I present what I have termed his contemporary ideology. Given that the purpose of this section was to provide a springboard off which to engage with his pedagogy, rather than the sole focus of this study, I have discussed only the themes that were most prominent during interviews.

Practitioner background

Mike's understanding of difference and consciousness of struggle developed from a very young age. His Jewish identity gave him a sense of belonging but also an understanding of discrimination. His political consciousness was shaped by this and by his involvement in a socialist youth movement which 'socialised him in a socialist way' (Interview 1). Later in the 1970s, his formal studies and involvement in the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) challenged him to think about what his socialist ideals and Jewish identity meant in the context of apartheid South Africa. Through both formal learning and informal political activity he developed an alternative view of politics, economics and culture and began reflecting on what it meant to be 'male', 'Jewish', 'white' and 'South African'.

During the 1980s, to evade conscription in the army he travelled to the West-Bank and subsequently got involved in politically related Palestinian activities. Through his experiences there, for example working as a journalist in the West Bank, he was exposed to the everyday and the extraordinary struggles of Palestinian people. These were embodied experiences which formed the roots of his popular education practice. He returned, after having lived in Israel, with emotional, mental and physical understandings of struggle that greatly influenced the subsequent nature of his activism.

On returning to South Africa in the mid-1980s Mike became involved in anti-apartheid struggle¹⁰ and registered for a Master's degree. During this time of heightened state violence and social upheaval (Straker et al. 1992), through formal study and involvement in the South African Domestic Workers Union (SADWU), he engaged in black women's struggles. Some of the stories shared by these women can be read in *Ekitchini* (Ekitchini Collective circa 1988) and include experiences of exploitation, sexism within the women's homes, and the pain that came with being separated from their children. These stories informed his understanding of the hardships faced by black women, in South Africa in general and more specifically by those working as domestic workers.

During this time of national, personal and interpersonal negotiation he was also redefining his identity as a man in terms of becoming a father: 'I had to shift my sense of who I am as a man' and this 'put me in another place to be able to do men's work because I'm hearing in a different way now' (Interview 1). 'Men's work' referred to working with men and exploring issues of male identity. His later visit to New Zealand in 2004, in particular visiting and working with Maori people and learning about how they approached men's work, further shaped the nature of this work.

By 1994 Mike had been involved in a range of popular education initiatives, in particular using theatre as a tool to conscientise people and for organisational development.

Since 1994 Mike has worked with a number of organisations, ranging from those specifically concerned with advancing social justice to those concerned with profit generation as their main aim, and from higher education institutions to government departments (Appendix 15). A socially conscious agenda underlies his engagements across these sites of practice (discussed further in Chapter Six). His involvement in the development of the Popular Education Working Group and Hands-On (Appendix 16) are particular vehicles for his work.

To summarize, Mike's popular educator and activist identity have developed out of a long engagement with communities in struggle and also conscious attempts in his personal life to problematize power and maintain coherence between theory and practice. His engagement in popular education is based on this personal journey that he has

¹⁰ For example the Detainee Parents Support Committee and the Community Arts Project.

undertaken. This speaks to Walters (1996:34) claim that in order for popular educators to facilitate the critical reflection of others in line with the principles of popular education he or she must have gone 'through a period of consciousness raising which enables them to confront their own experiences and understandings of gender relations, race relations and other relations that are oppressive' (Walters 1996:34). This personal work lays the foundation for popular educator's roles as both educators and leaders.

This brief consideration of Mike's background provides a basis for understanding his contemporary ideology.

Exploring the practitioner's contemporary ideology

Power came up as a central concern: Mike discussed this in terms of how it is exercised and by whom, how those without a sense of their own personal power need to be supported to realize this and how new sources of power need to be created. In this section his ideology will be presented through three themes: problematizing the 'left'; 'personal as political'; and problematizing knowledge and power.

Problematizing the 'Left'

Mike explained that he draws on a left-wing Marxist perspective (Interview 2) to understand aspects of the world around and within him. But, while he considers himself a communist he identifies a number of points of disagreement with the philosophy and practices of the left both here and internationally. As such, on the one hand, in terms of the left's theoretical commitments to social justice, freedom and the development of liberated individuals he echoed and elaborated on these. On the other, he critiqued the way the left has exercised power historically and its current failure to address issues located at the micro-level. This is discussed below.

Mike noted that the key value that connects him to his work is social justice, to him this means equality. He rejected the notion that capitalism, the free-market and neoliberalism will facilitate this and advocated for alternative ways of operating within this system. In particular he discussed that cooperatives are the only form of organisation that he would like to see. Furthermore he identified the relevance of equality from the level of the system (for example in terms of quality housing and wages for all) to individual

relationships (for example the sharing of domestic labour between all those living in the household).

While Mike advocates for equality he is mindful that this is not to be at the expense of people's possibilities to be self-determined. He is concerned that equality not be equated with uniformity or the establishment of unquestionable or imposed truths. For example, while he is in favour of mechanisms to maintain and support equality he stated:

I'm in favour of those kinds of things but ... not at the cost that we all have to believe one thing or there's only one truth, there's many truths and my communist truths are only my communist truths (Interview 3).

In this vein he highlighted a contradiction in the theory and practice of the left. On one level the ideology calls for the development of the 'new socialist person': a self-determining free thinking individual who 'acts differently from one who exploits other or has false consciousness' (Interview 3). On the other hand he suggested that the left has often advocated unquestionable truths, using violent means to supplant one way of thinking and being with another. He advocates instead for a humanistic orientation based on respect and non-partisanism.

Linked to the idea of developing the 'new socialist person', Mike believes that revolution is a continuous process and that the moment we are currently in is about developing individuals and healing (discussed further in Chapter Six). He asserted that the emphasis on the collective in our current context – he spoke in particular of the trade unions penchant for collective actions and campaigns – and the focus on party politics and ideology will not facilitate individual development or by extension social justice given the historical and current nature of struggle. In terms of trade union education he noted:

I think our assumption is that ... I will join a trade union and I will learn the protocols and then I'll become comrade, and will liberate myself and through this process become conscientised. But it's not gonna happen by any set of magic processes (Interview 3).

This belief reflects Heng's (1996) experiences of education work in trade unions, social service groups and grass roots groups whereby 'personal individual processes were subsumed in pursuit of collective goals' (Heng 1996:204). She concludes that 'it is necessary to include experienced emotional subjectivities in our educational agenda if we

are serious about education for empowerment' (Heng 1996). This echoes Mike's belief that the transformation of individuals – which includes healing – is part of a broader social project and is integral to social change.

According to Mike, 'socialism is about people's consciousness' and one of the outcomes of the focus on the collective is the lack of acknowledgement and reflection of how power operates at a micro-level. This Mike suggests is revealed in the lingering patriarchy in left-wing movements. He noted that when he started to work with masculinities he began to see how 'masculine power is reproduced in the context of liberation structures or organisations' (Interview 3) and indicated the dearth of women in leadership positions in social movements as an example of this.

Personal as political

Mike conceptualized personal space as the first arena where power is exercised and where power needs to be reflected on and understood as a prerequisite for fundamental and sustained change. He drew on the maxim of 'personal as political' when discussing this. His focus on the personal is reflected in his discussion of critical consciousness:

It's the absolutely key thing I'm working towards but not in the sense of a critical consciousness about the political system of the day. I think we must build critical consciousness about why are those men in that situation in Hanover Park and how much of that has to do with capitalism and racial capitalism in the period of their fathers and what does that mean for where they are now? ...But much broader than that, they've gotta develop a critical consciousness about themselves and who they are and how they go around in the world and who and what they're mobilizing as community activists or trade union activists. I'm trying to create a critical consciousness about society as a whole of which the political system is a part of, and who you are, the personal is political. So you create a political consciousness first about the person and we work inside that (Interview 2).

Mike's focus on working 'from the inside out' (Young-Jahangeer 2003) resonates with the underlying premise of Augusto Boal's 'Theatre of the Oppressed' as described by Nadeau (1996). Nadeau (1996: 53) notes this premise as 'the belief that the mechanisms of oppression in a society are reproduced and grounded in daily relationships: within the couple, the school, the family, the factory or office. To counter internalized oppression

... we must first look to daily life and uncover how these mechanisms operate there'. What can be considered as action in Mike's practice is therefore also shaped by this belief and is discussed in Chapter Five.

In terms of challenging how others exercise their power Mike is wary of not using forceful means to supplant one way of thinking and being with another. His ideas resonate with Stuart's (1996: 146) assertion that if 'critical thinking is seen as essential for creating sustainable social change: values must be generated from within, they cannot be imposed'. Furthermore, Mike asserted that exerting his personal power, in terms of enforcing the ideas he holds, on those he works with is akin to violence. Thus Mike considers it vital to deconstruct and understand his power and that of others.

As much as personal power must be deconstructed and understood it is also the starting point for empowerment and hence the beginning point where new sources of power are created. As regards working with marginalized people he explained this as follows:

I want to clear the way for you. And part of that is healing you internally so that you feel your own sense of power and strength. And surely if we're dealing with marginalized people before they can challenge the system they need to have a sense of and grow their own individual power (Interview 3).

His ideas echo Heng's (1996) belief in the role of healing in popular education work. Citing Miller (1986 in Heng 1996: 223) she states: 'these recovered psychological resources helped to develop a sense of personal power, the power to define and determine oneself and to act in ways congruent with that definition'. Mike's work reflects this belief that healing work is critical to personal empowerment and therefore to people becoming subjects rather than objects of change, regardless of gender.

Problematising knowledge and power

One of the ways that Mike sees power being constructed is through the valuing of certain bodies of knowledge above others. He rejected hierarchical relationships between different forms of knowledge, for example disputing that the knowledge held by intellectuals should be viewed as superior to other forms of knowledge. In this he seemed to reject the Gramscian (1971) concept of a traditional intellectual which suggests 'a certain superiority of the intellectual in their educational role' and 'a distinction between

their knowledge and the “common sense” beliefs of the working class’ (Ismail 2006: 26). Rather Mike emphasized that everyone has something valuable to teach and to learn. Following this he rejected that popular education is a process of simplification:

Many people believe that popular education makes things simpler for workers, I think that's a load of bullocks because we're not here to make things simple for people who we might perceive understand less than “we do as intellectuals”. I think popular education has a way of transferring complex ideas into everyday language. That's a different thing from simplifying ... and the underlying relationship has to do with power, the power of the intellectual in the working class situation (Interview 2).

Consequently he asserted that language and the way that concepts are presented have the power to either facilitate empowerment or disempower others. Mike’s position therefore, is that relevant knowledge is arrived at through the participation of all in the popular education process through the sharing of experiences and understandings.

His belief that knowledge construction is a joint process between all involved is supported by his view of really useful knowledge:

Being able to listen to other people's knowledge, that's really useful knowledge and I don't mean just listen, just hear the words, but really listen. And it doesn't need to blur your own ideology so I'm not talking about compromises ... I'm talking about just listen. 'Cause I think that everybody's got something that they can offer someone else. So I want to be able to listen very well. In order to listen very well you've gotta be self-aware. So I think self-awareness and how you act in the world to reinforce your own power in terms of class or age or gender I think that's really helpful knowledge, critical knowledge (Interview 3).

In terms of self-awareness he suggested that having an understanding of ‘how the system gives you a place and what you think your own place is in that system is’ (Interview 3) is important. Furthermore, Mike considers an individual’s understanding of how they are shaped by history as very useful knowledge. More generally his discussions of the role of history in supporting transformative education and challenging powerlessness echoed Nadeau’s (1996:51-52) reflection that:

Recovering historical memory helps to build identity, affirming who we are, where we’ve come from and what we might become. Because this remembering is done collectively, a

sense of collective dignity and identity is developed which is critical to the capacity of any group to believe that it can act in and on its present historical reality. In fostering the development of an oppositional voice, historical memory work is very subversive.

Crowther (2006:134) suggests that really useful knowledge has both personal and political dimensions; Mike's understanding presented above gives insight into what constitutes these.

In terms of problematizing knowledge and power, Mike questioned the tendency to place intellect above other ways of knowing and framed this as a dualistic Western mode of thought. He questioned why rational thought should triumph over emotion and why the latter should not be as valid a way of understanding, knowing or expressing something. He commented that at a 'deep philosophical level we get socialized into these binaries, only see these binaries. And it's more difficult for us to make sense of reality because realities more complex' (Interview 3). When I described his work as a facilitator as 'intellectual activity' he rejected this stating:

Why can't I have both, can't I be an emotionally in tune sensitive person and operate out of my intellect as well? I think that's what facilitation is about, that's what I'm striving for in my own life. And I don't know what type of intellectual that is but that's what I'm striving for. I don't wanna be ruled by the head you know (Interview 3).

When asked whether Paolo Freire was an intellectual he responded:

No, what I've read of him and films...I've seen: he strikes me as a very warm engaging human being. So he was thinking with his heart and his head. You asked this question in a different way once before: what gets me to Hanover Park? What got him to these rural villages in Brazil out of his comfort zone, out of his university? It's not some intellectual striving it's something of the heart. I think Freire said: ... if you don't have a strong love for humanity you can't do this kind of thing. So I think it's my heart that gets me to places, heart intellectuals hey (Interview 3)

Key values and vision for society

Mike's beliefs and visions for a different society are based on social justice, equality, respect, solidarity and in terms of governance, cooperatives and popular democracy. As

his belief in social justice and equality has already been presented I now consider the latter points.

Mike envisions a society where people come together and solidarity shapes our relations.

This was reflected in the c'Dabra teacher workshops where he reworded a participant's statement to emphasize the message of unity that was implicit in his words. For him unity was not only to be nurtured amongst the poor or within a certain gender group but also across classes, genders, different races and other social identities differentiating groups. In this his ideas support Freire's (1994: 29) imperative of finding 'unity in diversity' and feminist beliefs in solidarity and coalition building (Walters 1996:31).

A second key value that he identified was a humanistic orientation based on respect:

"Respek vir ek, respek die plek"¹¹ hey. I want what I'm building to be humanistic to be based in humanism and human values; does that mean I'm asking a worker who's exploited so many hours in a factory around the corner somewhere to be respectful of their bosses? No, no and I would want them to be as militant as possible. Am I prepared to be militant? Today I asked somebody from government if I can have a hunger strike in their office because for 9 months they've been telling me exactly the same story so I'm prepared to be militant, but I do need to respect that that's a life sitting in front of me. The boss is also a human being and when I move from militancy to starting to say 'that person doesn't have a life I might as well necklace'¹² them' then, for me personally, I'm on tricky ground (Interview 3).

Accordingly he asserted that human life should be valued as something profound.

In keeping with his emphasis on respect, equality and support for self-determination for all, he singled out cooperatives as the only form of organisation that he would like to see in society:

I want us to work together, neighbourhoods must be organized together, how do we break out of this isolation of suburbia? Large parts of the world are being covered by suburbia

¹¹ Afrikaans: 'Respect for me, respect the place'. Here he drew on a motto developed by the students in a school he worked with on the Cape Flats, also described by Fine and Abrams (2003:101).

¹² 'Necklacing': 'throwing a rubber tyre over a victim's neck, dousing it with gasoline and igniting it thus burning the victim to death' (Necklacing 2011).

increasingly. I'd like to see a society which is organized on the basis of cooperative: governments, working relationships, family, I don't care who your family is if you're 6 men living together that's your family, but it must be cooperative so that's what I'd like to see (Interview 3).

We did not have deep discussions of how he interprets democracy, although he did mention that he wants to see popular democracy, which for him is about multiplicity. A critical foundation of this must entail tolerance so that people's different beliefs are respected. Furthermore he believes in socialist democracy, central to which is equality.

This brief consideration of Mike's background, current beliefs and ideas provides an insight into his ideological orientation. This in turn lays the foundation for an engagement with his theory and practice of popular.

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Chapter 5. Popular education: theory and practice

In this chapter I describe and conceptualise Mike's educational theory and practice. I begin with a general discussion of how he views the nature of popular education. I then discuss and analyse his learning and teaching theory and practice. I then describe his methods and techniques. Lastly I discuss his role in facilitating action and mobilising people and explore his expectations regarding the impact of his work.

This analysis also gives insight into how his ideology is interpreted at the level of educational theory and practice as well as insight into the consistency between these dimensions. It also gives insight into his ideology in terms of the various ways in which he produces, challenges, reproduces and transforms social meaning and structures in his social practices and relationships (Foley 1999:14).

A process of handing over power

Mike's philosophy of popular education centres on the themes of: poverty eradication, empowerment, and praxis or process work. Firstly the emphasis on poverty eradication places his understanding of popular education firmly as being about working with poor and marginalised members of society, those he described as being 'messed over by the system' (Interview 4). His work also offers insight into what it means to empower those who in some way are already in positions of power.

In terms of empowerment, Mike stated that 'people must stand up for themselves' (Interview 3). In order to do this popular education should facilitate people gaining a sense of their own personal power and building this in a responsible and critical way. What this means in his pedagogy is complex. This entails a consideration of how people exert power and how power is exerted over them (of both those traditionally termed oppressed and oppressors). His focus on empowerment is reflected in *Cooking up Community* (Fine and Abrams 2003) in which there is evidence of platforms and processes created to support the emergence of different voices and the engagement of these with dominant voices and ideas that shaped their situation. While these spaces allowed for the nurturing of self-confidence and voice they also provided space for challenging the way and ends to which power was exercised within the schools. His

practice highlights important aspects of working with those who hold power and exert this over others, but also who can be considered part of an oppressed class or group. In particular his work with men and school teachers highlight some of these dynamics.

In the first instance, in his work with men, the process of empowerment includes a consideration of how masculine subjectivities are shaped: while men's agency and power is considered, so too is how their identities have been shaped by the 'psychological brutality of colonization and the racial hatred of the apartheid state' (Hands-On-Collective n.d.:1). Through a consideration of, for example, history, class experiences of exploitation, cultural beliefs and internalized oppression (Hands-On-Collective n.d.) the generative themes prevalent among the men are explored and used as a base for further dialogue and empowerment. Empowerment with the men has included deep introspection, healing, and through this the men beginning to see themselves and their families in different ways, which in turn generates a sense of hope (Hands-On-Collective n.d.). This was supported by my observations of how men at the CASE workshop rejected sexist remarks from a visiting community resident who declared that women, along with alcohol, are a distraction which leads men astray. This idea was verbally rejected by some of the men thus causing the 'outside' participant to retract his comment.

In terms of Mike's work with teachers, an example of how empowerment is facilitated across those with different authority can be seen in the process of developing democratic forums for staff and students to co-manage their schools (Abrams and Fine 2003, see Appendix 17). An example of working with those in positions of power can be seen in an emotionally charged situation is described by Fine and Abrams (2003) whereby one teacher's truth challenged the behaviour of some teachers who exerted power in a way that was detrimental to others (Appendix 18). The situation is described as follows: teachers were confronted with the fact that through their irresponsibility they were undermining their fellow teachers' ability to do their own work and develop respectful relationships with the students which in turn affected the student's education. Upon this situation emerging however the school principal interjected to halt the process, he was then confronted by the facilitators as to why he did not want the situation dealt with. The following extract discusses how the principal's (Mr. Le Grange) personal issues impacted on his role as a principal and elucidated his responsibility within this situation.

Eventually Mr. Le Grange sat down. Looking a bit shaken, he started to talk. 'Ever since I was a young boy I have been scared of failure, of not succeeding. I was always under pressure to do as well as my brother, and never did. When I didn't, I covered it up by pretending I was succeeding. I suppose I am doing this here at this school. Not acknowledging my failure. Pretending I am doing ok'.

A teacher put up her hand. 'I think that it is not Mr. Le Grange who is not succeeding it is us. All of us adults at the school we have lost touch with the learners, with ourselves and with our profession. When a learner comes to school hungry, we pretend we don't see it, when he or she has problems at home, we pretend we don't see it. When a staff member does something wrong, we turn the other way. We have lost touch. On the dot of 3pm we go home. It is time to reconnect with ourselves. (Fine and Abrams 2003:46)

The way that this situation was dealt with by Mike and his co-facilitator gives insight into how his work enters the learning dimensions of people's lives (Nadeau 1996) and in turn how those in positions of power can come to see their collusion in the problems they identify. In terms of the interventions in which Mike is involved, the extract above illustrates that there are a number of aspects to empowerment and that empowerment is amongst other things also about reflecting critically on how and why we make use of authority and power the way we do. Furthermore empowerment in his practice echoes the importance of addressing the 'specificity of people's lives' and of analysing 'the contradictions between conflicting oppressed groups' (Weiler 1996).

Mike noted that popular education work is process work and that his approach developed through praxis. The process dimension was discussed in the following ways: popular education as a process of handing over power to others; as process work it is driven by all who participate in it; popular education as a process that changes over time through reflection on and in action (praxis).

In terms of handing over power Mike noted:

The thing about popular education's you've got to hand over power. What it means when people say trust the process, is that you're in a process of handing over power to people and you've gotta trust where it goes, you mustn't hold them back' (Interview 4).

Based on this underlying trust, as a process it is guided by those who participate in it, both within workshop situations and also in terms of larger interventions. In terms of this Mike noted:

...how we will get to the proposed learning outcomes will depend group by group I don't quite know each group how we going to get there I'm prepared to undertake that we will get there (Interview 2).

This was evident in the c'Dabra Teacher Workshops. While he had a workshop outline and was somewhat restricted due to the nature of his engagement, he manoeuvred within this in an attempt to follow the group process. As an example, on the first day he adhered to the programme and finished the day off with an exercise planned before the workshop. In contrast, on the second day he responded to where he thought the group was in terms of feelings and ideas and chose as the last exercise a physical visioning activity. In general I noted that this created learning opportunities that extended beyond the course as it was based on issues the participants raised themselves, and hence they had a vested interest in the learning. It was apparent that this was the case as some of the teachers went back to their schools and discussed the workshop with their colleagues; on the second day when the next group of teachers introduced themselves some of them noted that they looked forward to being motivated like their colleagues who had attended previously.

Theories of learning and teaching

Much of Mike's discussions of teaching and learning were relayed in small stories or as part of discussions of other themes. Below I discuss three main themes that seemed to underpin his theories of teaching and learning: 1) the democratic imperative in learning and teaching, 2) learning as an exploratory journey, and 3) learning and teaching as a personal embodied and group process.

The democratic imperative

A key aspect of learning and teaching according to Mike is that learning and teaching happens best in a democratic space where there is a balance of power between people:

If I take a Freirian approach, the best learning happens when our power is balanced, when there's some understanding of each other's powers and we reach a balance of those powers (Interview 2).

This quote was taken from his discussion of his relationships with the men he worked with in CASE. 'Understanding each other's powers' speaks to his idea that in some ways he can never be equal to those men because of his differential access to resources (Interview 2). In his discussion of Gramsci and Freire's ideas of class suicide, Mayo (1999:116) suggests that no matter how much an educator can 'side with the oppressed' and adopt a position of marginality, his or her class position – and importantly in the South African situation their race and gender position – will preclude a full knowledge of their daily struggle, the 'everyday pain suffered by disenfranchised people as a result of their social location'. Feminist popular educators suggest that in order to carry out democratic education in the light of differences in power an educator must be conscious of the 'implicit power and limitations of the position of the teacher' (Weiler 1996:133). Mike's ideology of problematizing knowledge and power, questioning the idea of intellectuals' superior claim to knowledge and his focus on how power is exercised between people (personal as political) speak to these imperatives. It is in the light of these considerations in his practice that his suggestion above that people can come to understand each other's powers and reach a balance of powers should be interpreted.

Learning as an exploratory journey

As mentioned previously Mike views popular education as a process: this is reflected in his portrayal of learning as an exploratory journey. He spoke in particular of the importance of time and space as part of this:

you're to go fast enough so that they start to see an impact on their own lives but you can't go too fast ... it's gotta work its way through the individual and its gotta work its way through the family. And as much as I can go like 'so why you beating your wife?' That's forced development for me. The mirrors right in your face, you know I'm there on your skin. That person can still not go faster than they can go. You've gotta see and understand that journey and allow space for that. So you can push at a specific moment, but you can't keep on pushing all the time. That persons gonna burn out, their family's gonna burn out (Interview 2)

Space in this quote includes space for the 'mind and body together, with the physical, emotional and intellectual parts of a person' (Fine and Abrams 2003:57-59) to heal and develop. He suggested that the 'space' created in a learning experience, could either suffocate or provide room for growth. As to the question of why he does not focus on the structural conditions that undermine people's lives in some of his interventions, he stated:

When you working with individual psyches you gotta give people some room to move, face up against the present isn't the easiest place. So let me decode that a little bit. If we start understanding the complexities of neoliberalism it makes it difficult for somebody to heal themselves because (L: because they'll already feel like they stuck) I mean you're screwed basically. I want to clear the way for you and part of that is healing you internally so that you feel your own sense of power and strength. And surely if we're dealing with marginalized people before they can challenge the system, which is why I'm saying if you do it face on, if you look at globalization all the time, just as an example, and how unlikely you are to get a job and etc etc, it's very difficult to do that healing for yourself and then you can't empower yourself (Interview 3).

Related to this Mike was aware that information he and his co-facilitators introduce must be done in a way that empowers people. For example when sharing new ideas about the historical and contemporary forces shaping people's lives, he asked:

how do we share those learnings with people who're in that context today in a way that they don't feel disempowered by that sharing but feel empowered enough to walk alongside us (Interview 2).

Through working within people's frames of reference and following the journey of the group, new ideas were introduced. His understanding of learning in this sense confirms Hughes' (1996) suggestion that learning with a view to conscientisation involves gradual engagement with the structural conditions shaping people's lived reality. Rather than Hughes' (1996) description of this happening in concentric circles, whereby learners' experiences are gradually situated in widening contexts, Mike described this as an exploration, which implied a less formulaic approach.

Learning as a personal, embodied and group process

Mike's conception of learning is that is an individual and group process that engages the emotions, feelings, spirit (not in a religious sense), physical body and the mind and involves personal commitment. I discuss this below by considering how he spoke of learning as a personal, embodied and collective process.

Firstly, learning is something people have to commit to and undertake for themselves. In terms of the responsibilities of the men in the 'men's group' in Hanover Park he explained:

you're committing yourself to taking yourself through a process of understanding who you are, in this case, as a man much better and you must take responsibility for that
(Interview 2).

Secondly, for learning to happen Mike insisted that people must engage with what is happening in an intervention in a personal way, even if he is teaching them something specific. He suggested that people must engage with information from their experiences and their own points of reference but also in relation to what others think and feel.

Thirdly, and in turn, participants are to be the points of departure and education is to be based on the lives of the learners. In his practice this includes working from people's experiences and how they relate to themselves, others and the world around them as well as their history. He noted that traditional political education 'goes over people's heads because it's not woven into people's lives, because we don't live in the political realm all the time it's in every other realm' (Interview 3).

Mike asserted that in order to 'weave' learning into people's lives, through praxis one first had to understand their contexts. He noted that these understandings would be partial and would entail certain assumptions. One that I noted during the c'Dabra workshops was that he presumed that certain cultural actions – marching and singing – were acceptable to the participants – all black, predominantly women – as a way of protecting themselves from the crime that they experienced on their way to school. One of the female teachers objected strongly to this saying 'who must march and sing?!' Based on later discussion during the workshop it was not clear whether many of these teachers were involved in mass anti-apartheid activism, as such this historic form of protest may not have suited

these teachers as Mike seemed to assume. Given that he had no contact with this group of teachers before the workshop, however, this does not undermine his considerations of attention to difference or his attempts to base education on people's experiences. It does however indicate that even where educators reject homogenizing groups and respect difference, they may still make assumptions based on race, class and gender.

The weaving of learning into everyday experiences was evident in the c'Dabra workshop albeit it was only a one day event. An example of this was how the participants' experiences of teaching as well as other life experiences and knowledge shaped the workshops (Appendix 9). While the explicit aims of the workshops were to teach journaling, and a reflective approach to teaching, the teachers' shared experiences formed the basis of the content and to an extent (discussed further in Chapter 6) the direction of the workshops.

A fourth aspect of how Mike interprets learning was reflected in the way that he incorporated the body into his facilitation in both the c'Dabra and CASE workshops: for him learning is also an embodied process. For example, in terms of dealing with conflict in the c'Dabra workshops, participants were given space to vent feelings and when discussion reached a dead-end or stalemate, physical exercises were used to visualize the tensions that were present, inject a new energy into the group and create a different space for thinking about issues. Personal issues were brought out into the open, dealt with in a physical way between learners and became part of the group's learning.

Incorporating the body into personal and group work was reflected in the CASE workshop, whereby the men were facilitated to connect with their own bodies (the sculpting) and fellow participants' bodies (portrait drawing exercises) (see Appendix 10). As much as this creative sessions was about self-expression it provided experiences that could be reflected on to generate shared understandings of the men's lived realities. Mike noted that the type of questions that they would explore as a group in the following session would be based on the drawings and body sculptures done, and getting the men to think about how they relate to themselves and their bodies.

Mike's orientation to learning to some degree reflects Freire's (1972:69) assertion that 'it is to the reality that shapes men, and to the perception of that reality held by educators and people, that we must go to find the programme content of education'. However,

unlike this male focus this statement suggests, Mike basis learning on both women's and men's experiences. His practice suggests that for learning to occur people must commit to it; it must be based on democratic relations (Freire and Macedo 1995); the content must be based on and/or reflected on in terms of people's experiences (Freire 1972); it must have an individual and group dimension (Freire 1972) and it must be a process that engages the whole person (Nadeau 1996).

Roles and responsibilities in the conscientisation process

Mike considered his overall role to be the development of critically conscious individuals, of value in itself and as a means to working toward social justice. Facilitating conscientisation includes creating and supporting opportunities for this to occur and entails changing established beliefs and relationship patterns. The journey of conscientisation therefore requires various tasks and hence responsibilities of the popular educator. Within Mike's primary role of conscientisation two mutually supportive categories could be discerned: work that he does for his own growth and his role in other's development. I firstly present and discuss his role in his own learning and empowerment. I then present and discuss his role with others in terms of teaching and learning interventions (workshops) and broader interventions (for example large scale community projects).

Personal learning and empowerment

Mike's role in his own learning is to engage himself in constant development as well as to be vigilant of his own levels of hope, energy and personal power (Fine & Abrams 2003: 121). His personal 'work' – constant self-reflection, cultivation of self-knowledge and learning about the world around him – serves as a base off which he engages with the world around him and is vital in his work with others.

In terms of the need for constant self-development he stated: 'being an organic intellectual is a process for me I need to be in a process of constant development' (Interview 2). He noted that it is through the process of engaging with others and opening his power to critical engagement that he develops as an organic intellectual. He stated:

I can't always come with the answers because what am I setting myself up with if I say that those guys in Hanover Park, just for an example, can't teach me anything? Of course they've got something to teach me and I've got something to teach them. Now once I make that agreement then I'm opening up myself to others to challenge my power and I'm starting to take what I have and I'm starting to mix it with what they have (Interview 2).

Mike's understanding of organic intellectuals reflects Casey's (1993) description of the development of organic intellectuals. She states: 'As the students become more aware and more organized, so does the teacher; it is in this *process* that she is constituted as an organic intellectual of a particular historical group' (authors emphasis) (Casey, 1993:162). While Mike spoke of himself in terms of an organic intellectual he is mindful that certain differences between him and those with whom he works cannot be overcome given their differential access to material resources as discussed previously.

One theme of Mike's self-reflection is his own identity as a white middle class man, in the light of South Africa's history of apartheid and in turn, how he mediates this in his engagement with people with whom he works. Part of this was about opening up his identity and philosophy to being challenged. The following two quotes stemmed from a discussion we were having about how he relates to and works with people that are very different to him:

At a general level you've gotta be open to having your own identity constantly challenged... my identities always up for contest... when I worked in the domestic workers union, I'm a middle class white male there were only two men in the whole union as organizers, ... my identity was constantly under attack or challenged (Interview 1).

He went on to say:

You've gotta be open you've gotta listen, you've gotta acknowledge, you've gotta tell your own story but only wear the stuff that works for you and you've gotta be prepared to open up some things sometimes. You've gotta be able to learn about yourself constantly (Interview 1).

These quotes highlight his recognition of the importance of being challenged by, as part of learning from, others. Mike's reflection on his positionality and subjectivity as an area of personal learning and development speaks to Walters' argument that 'adult educators

who wish to challenge oppressive gender relations need to become self-conscious actors who reflect on their own privilege and oppression and act, alongside others, to change both themselves and society' (Walters 1996: 23). Mike's quotes above also reflect a belief in the learning potential of human relationships and echo his position that everyone has something to teach.

In terms of his own learning, Mike noted a number of other sources through which he learns about the world.

Mike's dialectic approach to learning reveals how a reflective practice adapts to context: through this process he stays connected to people, the world around him and contemporary ideas, and formulates ideas in an engaged, reflective and relevant or timely way. His personal learning and empowerment therefore entail learning about the world around him and his place in this as well as maintaining a critical eye in terms of how he exercises his power. This personal work also lays the foundation for the way that he intervenes in educational contexts in terms of keeping the work based on the lives of the learners. Walters (1996:34) notes that it is important that educators undergo this process as it lays the basis for their ability to facilitate conscientisation.

The learning and empowerment of others

Through the interviews it became evident that Mike is involved in numerous interventions in different ways. In Fine and Abrams (2003) the central essence of his role across these is captured in the following quote:

Being a facilitator is an art, like being an actor. You need to dig deep and draw on the many parts of your character; you can't always be one thing. Sometimes it's the warrior, sometimes the nurturer, sometimes the questioner, sometimes immovable, sometimes friendly, helpful and smiling. And I believe as a facilitator I should always be honest, direct and sincere (Mike quoted in Fine & Abrams 2003: 45)

Given the varied nature of the interventions he is involved in I was interested to understand his role as a popular educator across these. Through the field work processes several mutually supportive responsibilities could be discerned: establishing safe and nurturing learning environments; facilitating dialogue; providing leadership; and maintaining consistency between theory and action.

Establishing safe and nurturing learning environments

A common responsibility that was evident was Mike's attempt to establish, and evidence of his having established, safe and nurturing learning environments. Heng (1996:216) notes that the creation of a safe atmosphere of 'caring mutuality, trust and empathy' supports women to 'risk active participation and self-disclosure'. In terms of Mike's practice, aspects of creating environments conducive to learning included: the formation of caring and supportive relationships; facilitating in a way that encouraged people to have faith in the process, thereby opening themselves up; making time for fun thereby making learning enjoyable; injecting a sense of hope; and sharing his thoughts and experiences.

In terms of building relationships I observed this in different ways throughout the c'Dabra workshops. An example of this was when a group of teachers arrived late and Mike immediately stopped what we were doing and got us to move around and introduce ourselves. Instead of causing a disruption the latecomers were welcomed and included in an 'event' that created energy and appeared to be enjoyed by all. At the end of this activity, Mike commented: 'we're not here as two groups hey, but as one!' (Observation 3) Building relationships from the micro-level was evident as a central theme in his practice.

In terms of generating faith or confidence in the process, this is evident in *Cooking up Community* where an emphasis was placed on developing a process that could 'contain the energy, the dreams, the dynamics and new relationships generated in the intervention' (Fine and Abrams 2003). Furthermore in the c'Dabra observations, the way participants' opinions and experiences were actively sought and respected facilitated a positive attitude toward the intervention.

Instilling a sense of hope is also a central aspect of Mike's pedagogy. In terms of the c'Dabra observations, hope was generated in the way that despondence and negativity were addressed and in the way Mike engaged with the teachers' experiences and responsibilities (Appendix 9). This was not done judgementally but rather in a spirit of mutual inquiry (Stuart 1996). Furthermore in *Cooking up Community*, Fine and Abrams (2003: 121) write about the importance of 'lighting the flame in others'. All this reflects

Mike's assertion that if one wants to support the development of alternatives, one must generate hope.

Lastly, in my observations of c'Dabra what Mike shared gave him an air of approachability. For example, he shared a story about his role as a father in terms of dealing with his anger, he reflected on his role as an activist in terms of the sacrifices that this entailed, and he shared ideas learnt from other school communities, and in this way brought attention to the valuable knowledge that teachers themselves and the broader school community hold. Rossiter (2006, in Merriam et. al. 2006: 490) describes such a relationship as radical mutuality: the willingness 'to present oneself authentically to the other and be open to receiving authentic presentation of the other in return'. Mike being open with the teachers, seemed to help them open up to him and in turn to reflect on their roles and imagine possibilities for action.

Facilitating dialogue

In Mike's practice dialogue is an embodied process in which history, ideas, knowledge and personal experience (both his and participants) are engaged with and drawn on for reflection and by extension to support action. Dialogue for him is a humanistic undertaking in which he provides opportunities for people to reflect and take action and in turn to reflect on this. He explained that he draws on mirroring (a tool used by therapists and counsellors) whereby he reflects back to participants what he understands them to be communicating through a series of questions. He stated:

My service to you is I'm your mirror and you gonna keep on looking in the mirror. As long as I'm along I guarantee to make it fun and insightful and human building, building the sense of the human spirit inside you as an individual and as a member of a group
(Interview 2).

Mike's approach to dialogue mirrored a number of feminist discussions of critical reflection and knowing. Firstly, Heng's (1996:205) assertion that feeling is a 'critical way of knowing' and a source of knowledge was reflected in how emotion was incorporated into the workshops and hence as part of the extended dialogue. Secondly, the involvement of the body echoed Nadeau's (1996) assertion that the body is a source of wisdom. In both the c'Dabra workshops different activities required teachers to be

intellectually and physically involved and made space for emotions to surface. Experiences of these exercises were reflected on both in terms of how it felt to have done them as well as in terms of their roles as teachers. Rather than distinct times being set aside for engaging in 'dialogue' in these workshops, the mode of the workshop was dialogical (Appendix 9).

In Mike's practice dialogue is a personal and social process whereby challenges are made both by him and participants. In one way these challenges are about posing what the participants share as problems, this could be in terms of what they said or in terms of an attitude or disposition. An example of this was how Mike approached two central themes that ran through the teachers' workshops: the many challenges that teachers face at school and the disheartened attitude that resulted. The way that Mike dealt with this was largely through reflecting with the teachers on their role in contributing to the situations described, rather than discussing historical or structural issues such as education policy or social spending. He worked on their sense of responsibility toward changing situations and their belief that they had the power to do this. In this way his practice reflected attempts to break through apathy and to foster hope. One instance of this was as follows. At one point the teachers refused to imagine that they could do anything to change the situations they faced. Mike said: 'what I am hearing from you is that the situation is impossible, but what will happen if we do nothing? Where will our school and our children be?' (Observation 2). He then reflected back to the participants the situation of hopelessness they described by placing two teachers (in the centre of where we sat) in antagonistic positions and asking one to move forward while being held back by the other. This brought about laughter and discussion and after a while one of the teachers stated that one way to move problems aside was to make up one's mind to do so. She then told an inspirational story about a village donkey whose fate had been sealed but who came up with a simple and clever plan to save himself. The sharing of this story was a turning point. The extended dialogue that had occurred supported an increasing realization for teachers that they also had a role to play in changing the situations they described. Through Mike's facilitation many discussions developed which highlighted the teachers' potential to be subjects rather than objects of change.

The above illustrates how knowledge construction as part of dialogue is a social process, with Mike's role in this including giving input as well as guiding the conversation toward

creating a deeper understanding of the issues raised in terms of his ideological stand point. One of the broad aims of dialogue evident was getting people to become aware of their capacity to act on situations and to create knowledge. Given that my study did not include long-term observation of his men's work and that the c'Dabra intervention was a one day workshop, I was not able to observe how Mike engages with structural issues shaping individuals' lived realities.

Leadership: guiding interventions, facilitating action, supporting ownership

This section discusses Mike's views on leadership, his approach to guiding social processes and mobilizing people. In terms of the latter this is discussed in terms of how he supports people to take ownership of interventions and to take on leadership roles and responsibilities.

Mike asserted that in popular education everyone has an equal right to participate in social change. He argued that those who are considered leaders should have no monopoly on power and that what differentiates them may be their critical orientation to the world around them. This orientation develops through dedicated learning about themselves and the world around them and is a state that can be reached by anyone given the necessary guidance. What distinguishes leaders beside this is that they need to dedicate more time in terms of organizing and mobilizing people. He explained the nature of his role in organizing and mobilizing people as follows:

When I say I'm not organizing people, it's organizing people in a particular direction. So I do organize but I mobilize people around their needs. And I'm not saying that it has to have a particular political direction to it, you must choose that and I want to engage you in your process of choice. But you must choose it I mustn't force you (Interview 3).

Although he attempts to convince people that what he believes is right (Interview 4) he maintained that he will not force others to believe what he does: 'what doesn't work for people I must let it go if that's what's the barrier between me and you or me and your community I must let it go' (Interview 1).

In terms of planning for and guiding educational interventions, this involved carefully perceiving needs and understanding the context of the particular intervention. Planning of workshops and larger interventions involved much discussion with different groups (for

example government, NGOs, school communities), between him and his co-facilitators and (in some cases and at different stages) with participants. When I asked how Hands-On planned for educational interventions, he commented:

Don't do it the way it's in the textbook, whether its popular education or it's something else, do it in the way it works for people. And part of that is being able to listen very carefully to what people are telling you when you go for briefing meetings and things like that, listen really carefully, because they telling you what their needs are often and how it needs to be done. When you ask the question what are your needs you might get completely different answers. Now it's very difficult to go to a group of men and say 'oh we know you wanna be better at being a man what do you think your needs are?' There's no way that they can see that, because they're stuck in the problem. You can't see the solution unless you begin to open the way a little bit (Interview 2)

In particular he spoke of the use of storytelling as a key part of the preparatory process. His use of storytelling functioned to bring to the fore 'hidden feelings and thoughts that wouldn't have emerged in an ordinary interview' (Heng 1996:205).

While listening is a key aspect of the planning a process it is also a key aspect of guiding a process. Mike spoke of the need to listen at a number of levels, of listening as an engaged process and of listening with the heart. The quote below explains how through listening and remaining attentive he attempts to perceive whether people are undergoing personal change and to guide them through this:

You gotta listen for the emotion and the will that lies behind the narrative carefully and understand that and hope that you get it right. And that's what helps you to make that assessment. You also gotta watch people's energy levels. If I go to that group of men in Hanover Park we started to see about a year ago the energy that was released by their sense of liberation as they liberated themselves from their own concepts of themselves as men it was enormous it was just like this outpouring of energy (Interview 4)

A key aspect of his role in guiding a process is therefore also to understand what is blocking people's energy to act on an individual level and organise and resist on a collective level. In order to engage with people in this way he asserted that one must make oneself vulnerable:

In opening myself up you open up differently so it gives me space to challenge you which gives me space to understand you better, to hear and sense you better (Interview 4).

From this it can be seen that another aspect of his responsibility in planning for and guiding interventions is understanding those with whom he works.

A further strategy that Mike employs in guiding interventions is reflection during action. In running workshops he discussed that it is always better to go with two people: one person leading and the other watching and giving feedback. He noted that decisions made are:

...always based on what we understand to be best for the group to describe, to discuss, to work through the issues that they facing...we want to follow the journey of the group (Interview 2).

Assessing relevance and identifying needs are continuous processes and central to his approach to guiding interventions.

Lastly, Mike's intervention is shaped by structural investigations which include historical and contemporary considerations. He and his co-facilitators work to develop their understanding of how individuals and communities are impacted upon by history and by current conditions. For example, reflecting on his 'men's work' he stated:

...we've worked through all of these issues together Dezz and I. We've sought a clarity for ourselves on what impact did colonialism make on masculine identities over three or four or five generations and how do we understand that in terms of the context today (Interview 2).

Mike therefore locates his practice in an understanding of how the structural conditions of the past and present impact on people's lives.

In terms of mobilising people, Mike's ideology of working from the personal to the collective was mirrored in how he discussed supporting others to take ownership of and to take on leadership roles within projects. In his view mobilisation is an incremental process. The effects of this were evident in the CASE workshop where the men exhibited overtly their feelings of ownership of the process and hence positions of power.

One of the ways the men exercised their power was through making music. Intermittently throughout the workshop they hummed, sang and one man played the guitar. In my field notes I commented that there was a really upbeat feeling where no one appeared shy or embarrassed to be expressing what seemed to me as happiness, excitement, and/or contentment at being present. Faith (2000:163-164, in Young-Johangeer 2003: 105) notes that as 'a form of expression, music [and by extension all performance] is at the heart of social change'. The fact that men in our society are often repressed in terms of what may be considered as 'softer' forms of self-expression means that their show of solidarity and affection can also be interpreted as challenging a given identity and therefore be viewed as a form of political action. The dynamics in this workshop and the resultant way the men exercised power resonated with Freire's (1972:142) emphasis of the importance of cultural action as part of radical change. Freire states that to achieve 'indispensible unity [among the oppressed] the revolutionary process must be from the beginning cultural action'.

In terms of incremental mobilisation Mike's work in CASE illustrates this. In the following quote he was contextualising the emergence of the Monday night creative sessions:

We've started to plan long term, 6 months in advance, cause now the group's starting to form and a leadership's beginning to emerge and the leadership must be given space. We need to step back and allow the leadership to lead...and feel ...that we not gonna block them. So they went through a whole planning earlier this year by themselves saying the kinds of things that they need out of these Monday night sessions. We put that together with the kind of things we think that they need and we came to an agreement (Interview 2)

In this way as people move through a process they begin to take on different roles and to take on greater responsibility: here personal learning and empowerment and political organisation overlap. In Freire's (1972: 97) terms, the people Mike works with are facilitated to view themselves and take on roles as subjects rather than objects of transformation.

To summarise Mike's role as a leader is one in which he works to understand the conditions within which people live and the issues that they face, to understand the motivation for their engagement in an intervention or workshop he is facilitating, their

needs, and the broader context within which the situation is constructed. These provide the reference points for how he chooses to intervene and therefore guide a process. Through drawing on this, his ideological orientation and the purpose of the specific intervention, he engages people in a way that facilitates possible action. It is important to note that I have used the word possible as I cannot foresee, for example, what kind of an impact short term engagements like the c'Dabra workshops will have on whether people act on issues raised and acknowledged emotions. Furthermore his role is to support others to take ownership of interventions and to take on leadership roles. On another level his role is also about the example he sets to others and this is discussed in terms of the fourth responsibility: being consistent.

Being consistent

During our first interview, Mike stated: 'I want to be consistent and if I hold a mirror up to somebody else I must hold one up to me' (Interview 1). His concern with consistency between his ideas, values and action arose in different ways. While this is about his personal integrity and development it is also about modelling; being an example of what he tries to teach others. With regard to modelling Stuart (1996: 142) asserts: 'if we teach gender equity and model paternalism, if we teach respect and condone harassment, the chances for sustained personal change in attitude and behaviour remain small'.

In our interviews Mike modelled the sharing of ideas and commitment to others' education in the time and effort he spent engaging with me. According to him he modelled the type of responsibility he believes men should exercise on Wilderness camps by doing so called 'women's work' thus acting in a way that challenges gender stereotypes and making space for others to do so. Furthermore, Mike models his belief in cooperatives, by actively creating a cooperative with others (Hands-On) and working within this organisational form. Another way he models alternatives to capitalist forms of work is through the exchange of services (see Chapter Six). He models his belief in reconstruction and partnership by supporting civil society/government dialogue and community development. In reflecting on lessons learnt, in *Cooking up Community*, Fine and Abrams (2003:116) state:

We discovered that creating partnerships between people and groups was the key to building a community spirit. It was important for us to model in our everyday practices the principle of partnering, working together and co-operation.

It was evident that Mike models his belief that everyone has something to teach and learn by sharing stories and anecdotes that he had learnt from others and acknowledging the originators, with the different groups with which he worked. An example of this was how when asked what his key values are he drew on a motto developed by young people in a school in Bontehuwel on the Cape Flats: *Respek vir ek, Respek die plek!*' (Interview 3) as previously presented.

Lastly in terms of modelling, Mike spoke about the importance of living the following values: personal integrity, respect for others beliefs, being tolerant, being non-judgemental and engaging in relationships based on equality. One way that he spoke of integrity was in terms of accountability. In particular, reflecting on his work with government he spoke about the importance of this. In his practice being accountable was not only important in itself but also part of a group's learning. In this way he models a key aspect of popular education: that of democratic relations between educator and learner.

Methods and techniques

Eliciting a thorough understanding of the methods Mike employed in his practice was quite challenging. Not only were they wide ranging but they also responded to the specific context within which they were applied and in some cases were created 'in the moment' (Interview 2). The challenge of providing a complete list of his methods is captured in how he described what methods he would use to support someone through a development process:

...see I'm pausing a long time because I must put this very carefully I will use whatever it takes in a non-violent way if that person is willing to be part of a process (Interview 2).

In addition, as suggested by Freire (1972: 69), the methods Mike uses serve at least two purposes: offering the facilitators an opportunity to discover generative themes, and

stimulating people's awareness of such themes. This reporting on his methods, therefore, should be viewed in this context. (See Appendix 9 and 10).

Mike referred to a number of activities and approaches that he used to: create opportunities for self-reflection; build trust between people; bring different groups of people together; provide fun experiences for people; help people to understand an idea; and share learnings (of others and his own) and information. In addition these methods provided opportunities for facilitators to learn about participants and in turn to guide the learning process. The broader aims of the methods included growing people's sense of their own power, supporting people's critical awareness of the world around them and their relation to this and creating unity between people.

Mike uses a range of participant and problem-centred methods. The methods used in non-formal learning contexts include interactive talking in the form of: straight talking, debate, discussion, storytelling (as narrative therapy), and giving an input. Mike's description of storytelling reflected Heng's notion that it is not an individual narrative but 'takes place in interaction with the listening, questioning and reflecting of others' (Heng 1996:207). It therefore functions as both an individual and collective learning method. Other less conversation-based methods used include: drama, games, photography, watching movies, painting, body sculpting, clay sculpting and drawing. Other methods include turning everyday activities into exercises, making movies, and creating inter-cultural social opportunities. As previously mentioned he also makes use of mirroring and modelling. Wilderness camps also provided opportunities for various activities. In addition Mike drew on theory to support people's learning in certain workshop interventions by prescribing readings related to topics under investigation (IJR 2009).

As part of these methods Mike draws on metaphors, everyday experiences and historical situations to facilitate the exploration of issues under discussion. As regards the use of metaphor an interesting example was how soccer was used as a metaphor to work with young boys to develop their capacity to see into themselves and to understand how the system shapes their lives:

So one of the ways we went into that is we trained them. We had like six hours of like straight playing until they were like plat¹³, ok 'why aren't you fit then man if you want to be like that why aren't you fit what's going on for you, you're abusing your body hey! You wanna play for Manchester United and you're abusing your body, that's hysterical. Why you abusing your body?' So we're working at a psychological level inside their frame (by) using films and soccer (Interview 3).

Mike also made use of rituals for example 'circle time'. In particular when explaining why I could not write during the men's group, especially the 'circle' time he spoke of these as sacred spaces, but not in a religious sense. Mike's use of ritual echoes Nadeau's (1996:56) assertion that 'The creation of ritual, collective forms of expression engage the deeper meanings, allows for spiritual moments of connection and communion that can give clarity and strength to the work of transformation'.

The methods Mike uses are aimed at individuals, groups, families and/or communities and are generally part of a cumulative process. Exercises provide opportunities for personal and group development including healing, 'growing power', and building relationships. The description below of his work with the men's group in Hanover Park illustrates the multi-purpose nature of the methods, the way that they cross from the non-formal educational engagement into informal learning processes and their personal and collective nature. It also illustrates the process-orientated nature of his practice. Below is a discussion of how he and his colleague Dezz approach the preparation of interventions:

The way we would start is we'd sit in a circle and say, ok what's the issue... in Dezz's term 'wat gaan aan'¹⁴ and start from there and let's see where this goes to and let's keep talking about that for the next period of time. Out of that process your themes begin to emerge, because what's happening is the men are telling their stories so it becomes a form of narrative therapy. But what we're doing is we're pulling those stories together and trying to analyse them. Coming a little bit from the outside with different analytical tools we're trying to clarify them, both for ourselves so we can know where to go as facilitators but also for the men to see out of the stories what's emerging for them. What are the key themes here? 'Why is it that all of you are telling stories that you've got this kind of silent relationship with your father? Let's go back and think about the father then

¹³ Afrikaans slang for: really tired.

¹⁴ Afrikaans for: What's going on?

and the times the father lived in and why did it happen, let's work it out, go and speak to your father. Who's got fathers here that are alive? Go and speak to him and ask him and come back and tell us' and in that way we deepen it (Interview 2)

In this way Mike and those he works with convert general steps in a project and issues arising into learning opportunities.

The quotes drawn on in this section highlight that while Mike has techniques that he draws on across contexts (for example mirroring) his methods largely develop out of specific contexts, cross over different contexts and engage with people's lived realities. Furthermore, his methods reflect Walters and Manicom's (1996:21) assertion that popular educators must 'make complex and quick judgments in order to optimize the learning moment and make it as transformative as possible' but also that much thought and analysis must go into the planning stage (Walters and Manicom 1996: 2).

Educational impact and expectations for change

The strategic approach that Mike employs could almost be seen as impelling people into action. Through Mike's role of acting as a mirror and challenging people to understand the world and their role differently he challenges their collusion or complacency, thus challenging them to act differently. Action may be individual or collective and may take a number of forms. For example, in the work with men from Hanover Park one of the actions includes supporting men to share domestic responsibilities as part of a broader process of developing their consciousness.

Mike however was clear that the interventions he is involved in will have varied levels of impact. He stated, 'you can't force people to change their consciousness' (Interview 4). He asserted rather that the development of one's consciousness happens over time in response to different experiences and is not an easy journey. According to him, change is an incremental process and possibilities lie in even what may be considered small changes. For example, in discussing the possibility of the change that could occur through his work with men and the idea of democratic families he commented:

We're starting to talk about democratic families so we're upsetting the dominant construct of masculinity. What happens to them as people if they reconstruct their power in their families? Will that mean that they reconstruct power in their work environment? I

guess so because you start to see your family differently and you'll raise your children differently. You gonna start asking questions of the authoritarian structure at work, you might even join a trade union. It sets in process a whole lot of other events for you and we've got to that point because we're working within where they're at and respecting that (Interview 4).

On another level he noted that he could only expect a certain amount of impact and sustainability in the areas in which he works due to the structural conditions impacting on people's lives. As regards poor communities on the Cape Flats he noted:

The current situation, the material conditions in which that particular community (on the Cape Flats) finds itself, means that the change can only be so much. It can't grow more than that because people in that community are in a war of survival, and we're coming along with essentially a peace building/making process, which is relationship building. Heal yourself, restore yourself, rediscover yourself as an individual as a family as a community. It's very difficult for it to take hold in the material conditions of, I don't know the last 10 years, but I would say of capitalism, it's very very difficult... I think we've discovered something important in terms of working in community development and deep personal development but I don't think we're under an illusion that we can sustain this for communities over long periods of time. So we can make huge differences in individual people's lives. If community leadership would stand together for long enough we can reduce the level of violence in a community. More than that will require other things (Interview 3).

While Mike supports others in developing a vision of a different future he does not indulge in blind hope nor engage others in this way; thus the nature of his hopefulness approximates that discussed by Freire (1994). Mike acknowledges the complexities involved in working to influence established beliefs and kinds of behaviour. He also acknowledges the limitations of working within people's material and societal conditions. While he acknowledges these complexities he has hope that change, perceiving injustice and acting on it, could occur as ideas are implemented and shared over time.

This chapter described Mike's theory and practice of popular education. I now present how Mike views the current moment and the activist strategies he employs in relation to this.

Chapter 6. The current moment: naming and navigating

Freire (1972) notes that one must name the reality in which one wishes to intervene in order to do so in a critically conscious way. This section presents Mike's view of the current moment and the strategies he employs to navigate this.

Naming the current moment

A time of 'barbarism'

Mike described the current moment as one characterized by barbarism, a time in which 'the war of survival has got so bad that people eat off each other in so many different ways' (Interview 3). Correspondingly, he considers that we live in a 'neoliberal society with modern slavery being the order of the day' (Interview 4). As part of this description he discussed the immoral and violent actions of transnational corporations, profiting off, and in some cases supporting, misfortunes such as wars and disasters. This state of barbarism is worsened by the fact that we are starting to experience shortages of, and as a result, wars over key resources; he foresees that this situation will worsen in the future. He suggested that this state of barbarism together with the way people live are shrinking social networks and isolating people.

Institutional support for popular education in post-apartheid South Africa

Mike suggested that civil society institutions, including government, trade unions and NGOs are largely and in different ways supporting this oppressive system. He argued that with the move to democracy structures that facilitated the sharing of radical ideas and the building of strong civil society groups have fallen away. He suggested that structures that do have the potential to support popular education now outsource expertise, such as facilitation and organisation of workshops or community development programmes. The expertise preferred is that which is not challenging of established power.

In terms of the South African government, when asked if he thought that government's approach to development will address people's needs, he stated:

No, cause they talking about poverty alleviation and popular education's about poverty eradication. I think that all the development stuff they doing it's incoherent uncoordinated tender driven. It's ridiculous, it's got nothing to do with meeting people's needs, it's got to do with a capitalist state looking to domesticate people and make them feel like they're getting something out of it ... Which doesn't mean that I wouldn't work with government (Interview 4).

Similarly in terms of trade unions, Mike noted that ultimately they are not interested in empowering people as this might jeopardize their relationship with the state:

I don't think that what the leadership of trade unions in South Africa want is workers who stand up for themselves, who knows they might even start seizing the means of production. Then what will you do because you're in an alliance with the state (Interview 3).

According to Mike this aversion to supporting people to claim power is reflected in the relationship of NGOs with the communities with which they work. He suggested that NGOs do not challenge the dominant forms of power or empower people beyond a certain point of independence. While this is the case he recognizes that in his work he also offers a welfare service. In terms of the welfare function he commented that NGOs have 'got a function because capitalism produces poverty. The idea is to get rid of capitalism not to fulfil that function' (Interview 4). Stemming from this he suggested that the intervention of NGOs is 'deviating [people] from needing to rebel' through undermining leadership and shepherding people into different programmes (Interview 4). He questioned whether this will eradicate poverty and stated that:

...every time you come and give hand-outs you make people dependent, you make them sit around and wait. You create this thing called the culture of entitlement (Interview 4)

Mike therefore argued that there is a lack of revolutionary consciousness or practice and suggested that 'we're not building active critically conscious citizens anymore we're building compliant citizens who partner the state to implement development' (Interview 3). Moreover in terms of South African society, he surmised:

Do we really want to listen to youth? Do we really want to listen to poor people? I think we don't as a society. So that's why popular education doesn't have a space or why we have to fight so hard for our space (Interview 3)

The last two quotes crystallize what is implied in the quotes related to government, trade unions and NGOs above, that institutional support for popular education has diminished and therefore opportunities for practice have become very small. As a result new demands are now being put on popular educators in terms of: reaching different groups of people so as to share ideas, financing interventions, and related to this, doing radical work within or in partnership with compliant capitalist institutions. On the other hand, while Mike noted that the spaces have closed down for popular education he also suggested that there are many practices of popular education that are being carried out but which are unrelated. The challenges for popular educators in this regard are to weave together the work different groups are doing, to organize and mobilize these efforts to generate a collective force.

Social movement's and liberatory change in post-apartheid South Africa

Mike noted that while social movements are developing around and supporting people's needs, he questioned whether these are challenging power in any radical way. He posed a tentative question as to whether their radical actions are 'producing a revolutionary climate or a revolutionary ideology that we can build upon and critical citizens?' and surmised that they are not but rather that they're 'just helping people to survive' (Interview 4) in the capitalist system. In addition he questioned whether these movements are building new sources of power.

Making sense of difference in post-apartheid South Africa

Another important aspect of contemporary South Africa, according to Mike, is increasingly fragmented individual and group identities which in turn challenge the traditional oppressed-oppressor dichotomy and pose new challenges for collective struggle.

When asked whether 'oppressed' and 'oppressor' are still useful concepts Mike argued that the conditions in society require new terms, ones that can help deal with the complexity of the current context. As an example of this he problematised race, gender and class as proxies for 'oppressed' and 'oppressor'. In terms of gender he argued that we need to re-focus our gender lens. He asserted that the focus on women's issues developed out of a particular set of circumstances and that we now face a different (but related) set of

circumstances which necessitate a focus on masculine identities. He stated that currently there is a 'need to deal with the historical cultural intergenerational scarring that's taken place over a long period of time which is key to the formulation of men's identities' (Interview 3). Furthermore, he stated that South Africa's violent past has resulted in 'deeply scarred societies and individuals and male identities which are very integrated into violence' (Interview 3). While Mike affirmed that women are subjugated by men and their lives are being destroyed in many different ways, he noted that this is not uniformly experienced. He suggested that as a result of struggle there are many more women in positions of power and that this changes the oppressed/oppressor relationship.

In terms of class, a key unit of analysis in traditional popular education (Weiler 1996), Mike, when asked whether he thought it is still a way to make sense of South Africans' experiences, attitudes, or kinds of behaviour, the way we are in the 'world', answered that class is still the key division that he works with although 'it doesn't have currency in South Africa anymore' and is not always the 'thing which highlights the key divisions in our society' (Interview 4). Currently the divisions amongst people he is working with are along religious lines between Christians and Muslims and racial lines between Coloured and African people. While he suggested that you have 'got to work with the divisions that (people experience) and the way that people see it' (Interview 4), he maintains that class is still a key division in our society.

The way he problematizes these social categories challenges traditional oppressed/oppressor characterization and necessitates new conceptual tools with which to make sense of and engage with these groups in the current context. In another sense his challenge of these social categories as static, indicates an approach to theory that is non-monolithic thus echoing a number of popular educators (Hughes 1996).

In relation to these redefined identities Mike's position is that current challenges include finding 'new ways of organising, new discourses and ones that work for a different generation' (Interview 4).

Mike's discussion of the current moment paints reality as a problem which requires action and highlights areas that challenge and inform his practice. In intervening in this named context he makes decisions as to where, with whom and how to engage.

Navigating the current moment

In this section I consider several aspects of Mike's strategy that respond to the context described above: a focus on reconstruction, finding new ways to reach people, and working creatively in the new spaces that have opened up. While this section describes aspects of his activist strategies it also gives insight into his ideology in terms of the various ways in which he produces, challenges, reproduces and transforms social meaning and structures in his social practices and relationships (Foley 1999).

Reconstruction

Through praxis Mike has learnt that reconstruction is a much needed focus. He referred to himself as a weaver bird tying together people's different ideas and in this way bringing people together and facilitating reconstruction. Elements within reconstruction include: healing and rehabilitation of individuals and communities and linked to this building relationships; bringing different groups of people together; and facilitating an awareness of how people relate to each other. The last of these elements runs through his work in a number of ways as was illustrated in Chapters Four and Five.

In terms of healing and rehabilitation Mike noted:

...a lot of empowerment activities that come from the left are about empower yourself to fight capitalism I would argue that people are carrying so much in this country and other countries that you've got to heal a certain amount in order to generate hope and energy in order to generate (L: alternatives) alternatives and then we must allow free space for alternatives (Interview 3).

Mike considers the building of new sources of power to be a central aspect of bringing about social change and that healing and rehabilitation are necessary steps in this process. In this he reflects Nadeau's (1996:57) assertion that 'if we do not take healing work seriously, we are failing to involve the whole person in transformation'. She suggests that healing work in this sense is part of a broader social project. This was reflected in Mike's description of the work done with the men in Hanover Park whereby the processes of catharsis and reconstruction, as both individual and group processes, are part of a long-

term vision of mobilizing men in the community and developing leadership. Part of this process of healing and rehabilitation includes nurturing relationships between people.

Underpinning individual and group development is an emphasis on people recognizing their connectedness to each other and building relationships. This was evident in different interventions in which he was involved. For example, the first phase of the work described in *Cooking up Community*, is referred to as 'Getting into the ground: Getting Connected':

The connectedness of people to each other is what creates and builds community. When we are disconnected and out of touch our sense of community becomes fractured. In Getting into the Earth, we take the first steps in community building, identifying the gaps that exist between people – as individuals in groups, and within communities – and start the process of closing these gaps (Fine and Abrams 2003: 19).

This process of building relationships should support people to engage in a way that upholds democratic values of equality and responsibility and fosters the building of a sense of the human spirit. An example of this was how men in the CASE intervention were made accountable to their families through 'check-ins' where progress they reported was explored. In addition while there was a recognition of the harshness of the environment within which they live they were encouraged to take on a 'softer' role in their households. This required the kind of behaviour and attitude that challenged traditional male roles:

We would encourage those men to be gentle in their families... 'one day, can you be the one holding your child, give your wife a moment to sleep', 'can you be the one getting up at night and looking after that child and doing the feeding and whatever needs to be done so your wife can sleep even if you go to work the next day'. And 'can you constantly grow that physical bond with your child whether male or female, which is one of sensitivity and nurturing and listening, those more gentle things'. You must do that no matter how tough things are in Hanover Park itself. If we're gonna make spaces for families to survive in that context there needs to be gentleness inside the family and we want to grow it outside in the whole community, we want the whole community to be like that (Interview 2).

Mike's work with families echoes Walters' (1996:24) view that critical 'adult education work also needs to be addressed to the level of family and community'.

The importance Mike places on building relationships is evident in his efforts to bring different groups together. The strategic way he brought youth from different socio-economic backgrounds together illustrates this: he created an opportunity for cross-cultural engagement between students from lesser resourced government schools with students from a well-resourced ex-Model C school. Through creating experiences for different groups to come together, individuals are challenged to rethink the perceptions and assumptions they hold of others and to learn about themselves in the process.

Mike's focus on reconstruction speaks to the challenges he noted earlier including dealing with the ravages of historical racial capitalism and current capitalism, increasingly fragmented identities and the need to build new sources of power. In this regard he draws on popular education as practised in South America during the 1990s, which he noted was both 'challenging of the dominant power structure but [was] also an act of reconstruction' which '[allowed] it to be confrontational but coalition driven' (Interview 2). While firm in his convictions he is therefore not partisan or exclusionary. Consequently, his belief in reconstruction pushes him to look for different ways to reach people in an attempt to share his ideas as well as bring individuals and groups together.

Finding new ways to share ideas

In keeping with his belief that the space for popular education has become very small Mike employs a number of strategies to share his ideas with and to mobilize individuals and groups. These strategies also reflect his concern to '...find new ways of organizing, new discourses and ones that work for a different generation' (Interview 4). His concern with sharing ideas, among other things is based on his belief that social movements are about ideas and that in order for society to change, radical ideas that support social justice need to be 'welcomed and accepted by the majority of people' (Interview 1). He stated: 'I want you to buy into philosophy, ideas, social movements are about ideas, how do you spread ideas?' (Interview 4). Two ways that I identified are his attempts to draw on new technologies and to form networks.

Using mainstream information communication technologies

Mike's engagement with information and communication technologies (ICT) speaks to Mayo's (1999) suggestion that an incorporation of information technology is vital to

contemporary popular education work and that the critical appropriation of these can work in the interest of subaltern groups. One of the main groups Mike attempts to reach through ICTs is the youth. He attempts to find ways to use the technologies that youth are using by relating to the discourses in which they are engaged. For example, he is working on a project with South African History Online, using cell phones to get young people interested in history. He explained that this would draw on popular themes of sports and celebrity to offer youth an opportunity to write their own histories. For example, children can make a short film, using their cell phones, about someone who was a sports star (celebrity) in his/her community: ‘...this will be linked to presentations and watching other people’s films and input from experts. So I’m trying to use the tool to mobilize’ (Interview 4). In drawing on mainstream media in this way, opportunities may emerge for people to position themselves differently in the world by learning about and (re)presenting their history.

Widening the net(works) and building new sources of power

Mike employs a number of strategies to reach different groups so as to share his ideas (as a way of advocating for his beliefs), to learn from others and to mobilize people. Three ways of working could be discerned which had to do either with working within processes established or financed by others or by creating 'new' spaces. These include volunteer work, 'exchange of services' and employment. In terms of volunteer work this includes work with social movements, NGOs and CBOs in varying capacities. The Popular Education Working Group also falls within this category. The last two ways – exchange of services and employment – include (but are not confined to) work with groups that have traditionally fallen outside the sphere of radical work and will thus be considered below.

Exchange of services is a process whereby Hands-On provides a service and in lieu of payment the other party provides another service. An example of this was their work with a private company, Treetops, whereby Hands-On provided facilitation and programme development services in return for marketing services and being employed to work in different municipalities around South Africa (Interview 2). The strategic gains outweighed financial remuneration in terms of their social justice aim.

In terms of paid employment, Hands-On works with both government and private companies. In terms of outsourcing their work to government, this serves to both reach communities and to work to change government practice from within. Mike explained though that based on past experiences of projects collapsing, he now stipulated that certain conditions have to be met before he will work with government. In particular he revealed that he has become more rigorous when investigating the possible developmental impact and legitimacy of government initiated or funded projects. Furthermore he noted that in cases where projects come to an end and his work is still unfinished he may take on other projects so that he can continue the work that he has started.

Mike's work in government stemmed from the need for support for Hands-On it also 'speaks' to his assertion that part of the problem with the civil service is its concern with poverty reduction rather than eradication and that in order to address this we need a radical civil service, one 'that understands the nature of capitalism and the nature of the beast they're fighting' (Interview 4). Working within the system therefore is a contribution towards developing a civil service that is conscious of and actively seeks to change conditions and to manage the services they render accordingly.

The second group that they outsource to is private companies. His work with Allan Gray, a leading private investment bank, is an example of what this affords:

One of the impacts of the intervention that I've been doing with Allan Gray is its made [the young people involved] think about what does it really mean to be African in South Africa? ...So all I'm doing is I'm shaking up the way they think about things and introducing new ideas...[and] it's given a group of young people in the organisation another think about themselves and about what do young black professionals do in a context of such social inequality and how do they behave...I think it's also good for me cause must I only go to places which are safe and comfortable to test my ideology, or to advocate? (Interview 3)

On another level the income gained from this engagement could be used to support his unpaid popular education work.

However, Mike noted that there are situations that arise where his work is jeopardised by the ideology and practices of the companies. For example, while Hands-On had worked

with Allan Gray their working relationship came to an end when they requested that the company deal with certain race issues that were present. Allan Gray failed to comply and consequently Hands-On did not return. Therefore while Mike identified the need to be inclusive there are some groups that he will not work with as this may undermine the aims of popular education. In general while Mike recognizes the benefits of outsourcing he is also wary of the fact that compromises have to be made.

Creativity and compromise

Mike was very determined that I be made aware of the fact that he resorts to compromises:

You have to understand it in a context of what does it mean to be a popular educator living in a neoliberal society with modern slavery being the order of the day. I'm quite happy with you noting ...that I make compromises at certain times to reach certain ends be they political, financial social whatever. I'm not saying they necessarily justified, cause I live in a neoliberal society, cause then I can justify anything. But I am doing that and you need to be clearer about that (Interview 4).

Mike's philosophy and the challenges he posed of working in the current context presented above form the foundations from which to consider his work with groups with differing ideologies. While he saw these interventions as compromises I argue that they should also be viewed as creative strategies which support his work as a popular educator. This was illustrated previously in the discussion of his work with Allen Gray which gave him an opportunity to work with a group of young people which he would otherwise not have had. The creative and strategic nature of his activism is also evident in his engagement with c'Dabra.

c'Dabra would seem to function in the reformist model he suggests in his reference to NGOs as not being interested in supporting autonomy and yet he chose to work with them. He commented:

I was also exploring something in the sense of where is c'Dabra going to with this thing and is there space for me to come in here and to do some more substantial and long term work? By long term work I mean can we help educators to see a different vision for being an educator which makes school enjoyable for young people? If school in a working class

area is enjoyable for young people we get different young people, then the space for social mobilization is different. So for me I'm intervening in different ways, with different agendas in different places. Another side completely is I'm earning money and that's also what I'm doing there because in the Popular Education Group I get no money and I must have high commitment (Interview 3).

Mike's notion of popular education as a process is reflected in this quote, whereby working with teachers is part of his broader vision for social transformation.

The above cases illustrate the creative and strategic way Mike intervenes in different spaces, being mindful of and responsive to the compromises that are made in the process. In this way his strategies reflect Mayo's (1999: 26) suggestion that an 'effective strategy of counter-hegemonic education should therefore involve as wide a range of social practices as possible'. Given his focus of dealing with power at a personal level in both his work with Allan Gray and with the c'Dabra teachers this also reflects Mayo's (1999:26) argument that forms of power 'should be regarded as complex sets of social relations' and that 'one should challenge the power structures by attempting to change some of the social relations that give rise to it'.

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Chapter 7. Conclusion

In this thesis I undertook an investigation of the pedagogy of a popular educator, Mike Abrams, practising in post-apartheid South Africa. The work was based on the theory that popular education and how it is practised is determined by context (Ireland 1996). Given the changed context in South Africa over the last 16 years I therefore attempted to understand how a popular education practitioner responds to the political, social and cultural conditions prevalent in the country. In order to do this I employed case study research and qualitative methods to explore and analyse his pedagogy. The conceptual framework within which this was undertaken drew on popular education theory, feminist popular educators' critiques and radical adult education theory. The framework was developed from the conceptualization of the research problem through the various project phases and into the analysis phase. Through this process I developed a conceptual understanding of pedagogy that took into account ideology, teaching and learning theory and activist strategies. This spoke to the research objectives which were: to describe and analyse the practitioner's ideology, educational theory and practice; to locate the practitioner's pedagogy within his personal background; and to explore the links between the practitioner's ideology, theory, practices and current social justice issues in South Africa. In the remainder of the conclusion I reflect on the study findings, I then reflect on the research process and lastly I pose some questions for further research.

Reflection on the findings

What has been presented of Mike's pedagogy reflects assertions that define popular education as an approach rather than a method that can be transferred from one context to another (Walters 1996). As Mike's pedagogy has been formed through the principles of popular education – of praxis, dialogue, constant engagement in critical self-reflection and a search for humanism – his practice has developed its own character. Below I reflect on the main characteristics of his pedagogy.

Mike's ideology is rooted in his belief in a common humanity and the sacredness of human life. These beliefs extend into his vision of society as one founded on the principles of tolerance and equality and characterized by social justice. In particular while he identifies himself as a communist he argues for people's right to determine their own

beliefs and for multiplicity, tolerance and non-partisanism. This lays the foundation for the engagement of his ideology with the principles of popular education. Furthermore, his ideas of the personal as political, his rejection of hierarchy amongst different types of knowledge and his rejection of patriarchy approximate the ideas and experiences of feminist popular educators. In addition his descriptions of critical consciousness and really useful knowledge resonate with those put forth by radical adult educators (Foley 2001).

His teaching and learning theory in turn resonate with that of traditional popular educators (Freire 1972), feminist popular educators (Heng 1996) and radical educators (Foley 2001). In terms of popular education generally, he is concerned with developing and maintaining democratic relations between himself and learners, views himself as a learner, bases his interventions in the lives of learners and engages in problem-posing education and in praxis. As regards the similarities between his pedagogy and that of feminist popular education, he values different ways of knowing and engages others in embodied learning through engaging the mind, body, emotions and spirit in learning (Nadeau 1996); he is concerned about reflecting on his positionality as part of his own and other's development (Weiler 1996); and he recognizes the importance of individual empowerment in social change (Heng 1996). Furthermore, in terms of radical pedagogy while his background and work are guided by structural concerns he does not place this before working with people around their emotions and experiences. He investigates the root causes of people's problems with them, exploring how internal and external oppression operates in peoples' lives. In this way he attempts to address the 'fundamental causes, the deeper dynamics and the determining factors' that cause and sustain injustice (Foley 2001:72). Not prioritising structure over agency is a pedagogic approach to create hopefulness and hence to create spaces where people can imagine possibilities for action. In addition, through working from where people are his pedagogy gives an insight into what it entails to work with people in positions of relative power, in this case men and teachers and in fragmented communities. His activist choices bridge his ideology and theory of learning and teaching.

In Chapter Six I presented Mike's view of the current moment and his activist strategy within this named context. His naming of the current moment reflects popular educators' assertions that the move to democracy in South Africa has required different strategies

and understandings for those undertaking radical adult education (Endresen 2009, Ismail 2006, Walters 1996). In particular he noted: persistent inequality which is supported by the global capitalist system; that civil society institutions, including trade unions and NGOs are not challenging the structural conditions that are maintaining inequality; and that the South African government's approach to development will not eradicate poverty. Furthermore he questioned whether social movements are contributing to radical progressive change or not. For these reasons he noted that the space for popular education has closed down. While this is the case he also claimed that popular education is happening but that different groups need to be brought together to bring about change. In addition he stated that the increasingly fragmented identities which have arisen since the democratic transition also pose a challenge to popular education.

The challenges that he identified of the current moment reflect the choices he made and the strategies he employed. Earlier on I presented the question raised by Merriam et al. (2006:488) of whether there is 'space in the globalization community for adult education that offers (but also transcends) skills development by addressing social justice and personal enrichment needs?' Mike's focus on reconstruction, finding new ways to share ideas and working in a range of different spaces provides one response to this question. His experience suggests that spaces need to be actively sought and created but also that the conditions within certain civil society institutions and government departments resist the radical elements of the pedagogy. In terms of working with government, his experience of the lack of commitment to and consistency in community development work reflects other's experiences (Ismail 2009). Mike's engagement in different sites occurs against the backdrop of his ideas of the importance of building new sources of power and the need for healing and reconstruction and is framed by his understanding and constant learning about the structural issues shaping how people live and exercise power. It is against these beliefs that his approach of engaging in 'wide ranging social organisation and cultural influence' (Mayo 1999:38) should be viewed.

This exploration of Mike's practice has provided an insight into his vision of a project for social transformation in post-apartheid South Africa. Central to this is working alongside people to understand what the central themes are that have an impact on their lives; reflecting critically with others on how they use their power; reflecting critically on how

he exercises power; engaging in processes of healing; working to bring different groups of people together; and through these actions building new sources of power.

Reflection on the research process

This exploration of Mike's pedagogy has impressed upon me several lessons. The first is that the journey of reflecting on race, class, gender and age in South Africa is an important aspect of education that is concerned with transformation and it is as much a personal as it is a collective journey. The second is a methodological insight, a truism, which is that one can only understand research by undertaking it oneself. Once completed one would inevitably conceive of perhaps having done it better or presenting it in a way that more fully reflects one's understandings. Consequently I now understand in a different way that knowledge is partial and subjective. The final lesson concerns the challenge that confronts one when having to represent a practitioner's pedagogy in terms of the deep engagement with another's ideas and practices. As much as I reflected on Mike's pedagogy therefore, I found that I also needed to reflect on my own reaction to it. In some sense what he shared challenged me to identify what I felt about issues that I had either not considered or that I was still forming an opinion about. Thus I found that as much as research involves distancing oneself and assuming a certain impartial stance, one's subjective response must also be explored so that it does not pass unexamined into the process. As such while research is a rational and rigorous process it is also inescapably lodged in the feelings, emotions and experiences of the researcher at the time of the research.

Some questions for further research

Mike's pedagogy gives substance to the broad principles of popular education. Among other issues his pedagogy raises is that his ideas should not be engaged with uncritically. Given his insistence that people engage with his ideas from their points of reference and based on what this thesis presents, I will pose a few questions for consideration by researchers or popular educators:

- What is or should be the role of reconstruction in popular education currently and related to this the role of healing?

- What could an emphasis on building relationships offer popular education practice in the current context?
- What implications does professionalization of the work of the popular educator have on popular education practice (in terms of individual practice and in terms of their impact as popular educators more generally)?
- How are popular educators integrating the 'personal' into their work?

This exploration of Mike's pedagogy has highlighted several issues that give insight into possible approaches to popular education work in post-apartheid, democratic, neoliberal South Africa. It has also given insight into how a visionary pedagogy is practically applied in this context.

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APPENDIX 1

Letter of consent

APPENDIX 2

Field work schedule

Event	Date
First meeting	15 June 2009
First Interview	07 July 2009
First Observation (CASE)	13 July 2009
Second Interview	27 July 2009
Second Observation (c'Dabra)	30 July 2009
Third Observation	4 August 2009
Third Interview	6 October 2009
Interview 4	3 February 2010

University of Cape Town

APPENDIX 3

Interview 1: Schedule

Date: 07 July 2009

Themes and purpose of this interview:

To understand how he developed the particular activist identity he has now. To understand how he developed his educator identity. To understand how his ideology or world view developed. To understand these phases in order to understand the history behind or basis for why he believes and teaches and is an activist the way he is now.

Questions:

- 1) What was your life like in Welkom and when did you move to Cape Town?
- 2) What was the society like that you and your family were part of?
- 3) Were you in SACS from junior school? And high school? What were your years like there as a student?
- 4) What did you do when you left school?
- 5) What did you study? What were your student years like?
- 6) What made you first uncomfortable or when did you first become aware of the inequality in South Africa? The earliest memories of feeling uncomfortable with the situation?
- 7) Was there a turning moment or turning moments for you when you felt you needed to become involved in social justice issues? What challenged you to act?
- 8) Who were the influential people in your life that fired you up and made you want to do something?
(can be people you knew, theorists and activists whose work you read...)
- 9) What did you get involved in (organizations, protests, political parties)?
- 10) Did you travel around or outside of South Africa? If so can you think back to some of the changes that these travels brought?
- 11) When did you first come across Popular education?
- 12) Did you ever study education? If not how did you develop your facilitation skills?

APPENDIX 4

Interview 2: Schedule

Date: 27 July 2009

Themes and purpose of this interview:

To understand his work with the Hanover Park men's group. Through discussing the men's group observation to discuss his theories of learning and teaching more generally.

Questions:

- 1) Please explain the context of your involvement with the CASE men's group?
- 2) What was some of the preliminary work that they did with the men to bring them to a stage where the men were comfortable to share so openly with each other? Scale up to investigate broader teaching approach and understand how he envisions learning processes.
- 3) What are the implications of men changing their identities, given that these are formed in response to certain conditions in their lives, and what is the ethical responsibility in opening up these things?
- 4) Why was the theme of the body chosen? How did this theme come about?
- 5) What are some of his key observations of that session that he will share with his co-facilitator? (how ideology enters the learning/teaching).
- 6) Why will another facilitator be doing the follow-on reflection workshop and not Mike seeing as though he ran that session, won't he have a little more insight? Why joint facilitation across one theme?
- 7) More generally, how do you plan for educational events, what to focus on and how?
- 8) Are there key aspects to your facilitation that you carry across different places? What are your central teaching approaches?
- 9) What are you involved in now, the different things you're involved in and in what capacity cause you're involved in a lot of different things in a lot of different ways?
- 10) How does he envision the spaces he works in in terms of social movement activity (esp in the context where people who would be considered as oppressors and oppressed are together in the same engagement)?

APPENDIX 5

Interview 3: Schedule

Date: 6 October 2009

Themes and purpose of this interview:

To explore: strategies, his view of popular education, what aspects of contemporary SA (the current moment) impact on his practice and the values concerns underpinning his work.

Questions:

- 1) What has happened since Change Moves and Hearts of Men completed the project in Bonteheuwel in 2003? Is there anything you would do differently in light of this?
- 2) In your thesis there is a strong focus on the forces oppressing people with a solution seeming to lie in joining a collective movement in that case a trade union to change the situation in *Cooking up Community* there is much more focus on individual responsibility and relationships. How did this change come about in your practice?
- 3) In *Cooking up Community* there are elements that look at how the past has shaped people's current realities (e.g. History of forced removals in *Going for Gold*; *gender stereotypes that have been handed down*) but what about a consciousness, an understanding of how current structures shape their lives (eg budget allocation to schools).
- 4) What do you think is really useful knowledge today? (*really useful knowledge being what is required for learners to become enlightened "i.e. for them to understand the world in terms of their own experience and to recognise the potential to act effectively and collectively to change it" (Crowther 2005).*
- 5) Freire talks about the importance of naming the current moment so that we can intervene to change oppressive conditions. What are the key themes or key aspects about our current situation (*as South Africans, Africans and global citizens*) that guide your practice as a popular educator?
- 6) Why do you think it's so important to have 'weaver birds' in our current context?
- 7) In the last interview in talking about the situation of the men in Hanover Park you said it's not about oppression. Do you not think that there are forces oppressing people today? So do you think the oppressor oppressed concepts are unhelpful in working with people to develop a critical consciousness and at on this?

- 8) What do you think is the importance of intellectuals in our current context? (*in Cooking up Community you'll write that one of the tasks of intellectuals as facilitators of development process is to "open the space and create opportunities for others" and to "provide the support for them to build and use an opportunity" (p.118)*)
- 9) What is your vision for South Africa? (*You say that your vision for the Hanover Park men is to have a mass group of conscientised men in the area, how will this change their material conditions if there is no structural change i.e. if we keep a neoliberal Gov. which skimps on social spending etc.*).
- 10) What are the key values that underpin your work as an activist/intellectual/popular educator? (*In Cooking up Community the facilitators ask themselves the question: "what values do we have that connect us to this work" p 33, what is the compass that tells them which way to go in stuck times*)
- 11) Do you share a vision with all the organisations you work with, and if not how do you maintain your vision and practice in these spaces?
- 12) Related to his work with c'Dabra: criticism levelled at PE is that if education is not located in a broader social movement it will not necessarily result in political activity or social change. His thoughts on this?
- 13) At the workshop you said that there are no spaces left for popular education, what did you mean?

APPENDIX 6

Interview 4: Schedule

Date: 3 February 2010

Themes and purpose of this interview:

To clarify points that were raised previously.

Questions:

- 1) How many people in Hands-on, who, how are decisions made, how do you'll operate?
- 2) Where was the youth programme that the San Souci girls facilitated on with other learners? If it was a disadvantaged school, how was power equalised in this process?
- 3) In our second interview you discussed mobility and sharing learning's between different groups and that there were structures that were in place before to facilitate this, E.g. you mention the UDF. And then you said that now where these structures do exist they outsource expertise, why is that a problem for popular educators, why can't they secure these contracts? (got to do with the question of no space for PE)
- 4) What is your view on accrediting some of the courses you run (for communities, Gov. etc.)? As Hands-On have you'll considered accrediting any of the courses you run?

South Africa, Development, Liberation, Social Movements, NGOs', Governance

5. Do you think that the way development is being implemented by government will address people's development needs?
- 6) It seems that entering into government projects entails a degree of insecurity, is that true in your experience? How do you bring this to the fore when working with communities in government related projects so as not to create expectations and to maximise the time and resources available?
- 7) In our last interview you said "*we're not building, as a revolutionary movement critically conscious citizens anymore, we're building compliant citizens who partner the state*"? Is there a liberation movement? How would you describe this? (for what, against what, who)
- 8) We spoke in our last interview about the Popular Education Working Group and the slow forward movement. Why do you think there is reluctance for groups to come together?

- 9) In our last interview you suggested that NGO's are undermining people's motivation to act by providing a welfare function. NGO's historically have provided a welfare function, why is this not a legitimate position that they should take?
- 10) Do you think that class is still a way to make sense of South Africans experience, attitudes or behaviour, the way people are in the world. (because you sometimes draw on class as a social category when explaining something and other times seem to implicitly reject it e.g. in terms of using class to excuse behaviour)

General points for clarification:

- 11) In last interview you said that there are three areas in the life of mobilising people: 1) come as outsider to mobilise 2) the community identifies a need and you intervene at that point, what is 3rd?
- 12) You say that technologies like power point, laptops and overhead projectors are valid, but then why don't you use them? Esp. for youth, isn't it about making technology work for us?
- 13) How do you notice when someone is ready to 'get through this thing' and what thing were you talking about (n.b. part of his teaching, how he makes a choice that someone is on another level to engage in deeper self-reflection, ready to engage with different or challenging ideas...etc.)
- 14) Is there anything you feel I haven't asked you that I really should have to understand your work as a popular educator more?

APPENDIX 7

General points for workshop observations

- Where is the meeting being held?
- Who is there?
- What is happening?
- What is the session content?
- What methods are employed?
- Is their curiosity? How does he nurture participant's curiosity? And support their desire to learn?
- Do the members show commitment/seriousness to the learning event?
- Do they act collaboratively?
- What are some of the themes that are discussed?
- What adult education principles are underlying this workshop (note specific incidents where these are manifest)?
- How is learning and teaching based on life experiences? What is the process of using these experiences as a point of departure for learning? And learning what? What is learning directed at?
- How is power shared between educator and learners?
- How does he leave his power as an educator open for discussion by the learners? (so that he is not teaching the learners to be mere shadows of himself) – Freire and Macedo (1995)
- What are some of the critical tools he gives them to understand their world? (so that he equips them to 'lift the lid'? - linked to the point above). Freire and Macedo (1995)
- To what extent does he seem to be submerged in their world?
- How much does his approach relate to this: dialogue as a process in which learners experience is critically reflected upon in relation to dynamics of power, agency and history?
- In terms of social movements and learning: '...the creation of knowledge as well as identity formation is central to movement...' (Eyerman and Jamieson in Ismail

203: 53): what knowledge is being created and how are these identities formed?

- Are there any structural issues that are discussed (eg capitalism, globalisation) and if so by whom?
- What are the social justice issues they are concerned with?

APPENDIX 8

Example of Field Notes: CASE Observation

After circle Mike told us that they (as a group) had decided that they want creative sessions and that tonight we were going to do three exercises time permitting. The first would be to do clay sculptures of ourselves, to get in touch with our bodies (as Mike said that he ran his hands down his body to connect what he was saying to the physical act of connecting). Then after that we'll draw ourselves, who do we see when we look into the mirror? Then lastly if we have time we'll paint. 'So could everyone take a lump of clay as big as they need and mould themselves as they want' (Mike). Laughing and talking and some quiet. The exercise was done with irreverent reverence (kind of like all the exercises were done). There were a range of different figures, some with faces some without (Mike later commented that it was mainly the older men that didn't put faces and that he would feed this back to Dezz in the debrief and Dezz would reflect back with the group as to what these different expressions could probably mean). The one young man made a ball; I think it was a stone, whatever it was I think it was representing something closed. [Later Mike suggested that it represented blockage, anger... in the car he asked: how do you teach a kid when he has this block sitting inside of himself. We discussed this use of the blank (blank paper empty space and metaphor, as in an empty space with something that can be filled, with who you are now, who you want to be...whatever you want, that will help to define their individually journey and also inform the collective journey on the group. Mike spoke of how it was so difficult to work in a group way with such diverse experiences and directions.)] Some men moulded themselves as flat gingerbread-like figures and others standing up like body builders, some sitting...Mike briefly asked for comment, some mentioned that some were really squashed (I think) I commented that some had faces and others didn't. Mike did not give a long debrief cause this wasn't a reflection session. We then went onto the next exercise. We were all told to sit around the table and take a mirror (some needed to share) a pencil and a piece of paper. We were then told that we had to draw ourselves as we saw ourselves in the mirror. Mike told us to remember that the pencil could draw both thin and thick lines and that we had different types of lines on our faces. We then started drawing. Some sharing mirrors, some *giggling* as they drew, mostly serious (in between laughs), we all sat there looking at ourselves... Some of the men made noises as they drew, noises of surprise (either because they saw something they liked or disliked I'm not sure), noises of mild self-depreciation (I think it was mostly self, some people lightly laughed at their neighbours attempt, but generally the focus was themselves)... The next step after this was to pass our portraits to the person on our right. Each person was to add one thing.

APPENDIX 9

Observation of c'Dabra Teacher development programme

Workshop dates: 30th July and 4th August

Submitted to c'Dabra

This text forms part of an exploratory study of popular education based on a case study of Mike Abrams' practice. It is based on my observations of two c'Dabra teacher training workshops. I consider: workshop content, methods, facilitation and the adult education principles I understood to underpin the workshops. As these programmes follow a semi-structured plan I have used these headings simply as entry points to discuss what I observed during the two days.

Content

The explicit aim of the workshop was the development of reflective practice amongst teachers, through improving their understanding of the reflection action cycle and beginning a process of journaling.

The programme was participant driven and a large part of the content that formed the basis of discussion was raised by the participants and facilitators through dialogue. Themes included: challenges faced by the teachers and them beginning to imagine these differently; the need to learn from our history and culture; personal power and responsibility (as a teacher); thinking about how we view learners/children; looking at how we can do things differently; thinking about our roles within current struggles and learning from our past. These were discussed to different lengths but their emergence supported the development of a critical awareness of the situations that the teachers described in their schools, more particularly their responsibilities within these situations. The educators' immediate realities therefore formed the basis of the workshop.

Through observation it became apparent that for the teachers to adopt a reflective approach required them to: see the need for and value of reflective practice; have a sense of hope that they and their schools can change for the better; believe in their ability to

contribute to positive change in their schools and the immediate community; undergo honest personal reflection; take time to write in their journals and to contemplate what arose through the writing process; possibly take action where this was identified as a necessary step. The stated aims of the workshop therefore required an intervention that addressed a number of 'levels' as it engaged with peoples values and attitudes as well as teaching a new skill and developing new knowledge.

Other themes ran below the surface of the workshop, these included: the building of relationships; re-imagining learning and how we teach; and the importance of valuing our experience.

Methods :

My questions in looking at the methods were: to what extent did the methods employed contribute to the aims of the workshop? Another question I considered was to what extent did the methods of the workshop contribute to the facilitator aims. On discussion with Mike he identified that his aim was for the teachers to see themselves as active participants in the course. As an extension of this I understood this also to be about the educators seeing themselves as active participants in their role as educators which is also a leadership role.

The structure and facilitation of the workshops encouraged engagement between participants as well as between participants and facilitators. There were no formal inputs from facilitators¹⁵ and the workshops were run more as an extended dialogue that happened throughout the day. I understand dialogue to mean, engaging with something (an idea, situation, problem) with others with a view to furthering our understanding of it, digging below the surface and saying things plainly¹⁶, as well as appraising the issue from different angles. Rather than having distinct times during the workshop where participants engaged in 'a dialogue' I would consider the mode of the workshop to have been dialogical, as each activity supported the previous one and provided further material for critical engagement. The extended dialogue refers to a constant engagement with the

¹⁵ Exercises were introduced and explanations were given (e.g. of the action reflection exercise and what the different objects represented) but this was done in an informal way that did not seem to place the facilitators input apart from that given by participants.

¹⁶ By this I mean speaking in a straightforward way without purposefully complicating the matter at hand or being evasive.

teachers experiences of their profession, their ideas around teaching and a focus on imagining a different situation for themselves and their schools.

The sequencing and exercises differed on the two days I attended the workshops. Among other things I think this served to create learning opportunities that extended passed the course as teachers could return to the schools and discuss the different issues and exercises that occurred on the different days. Why do I say that the structure and facilitation encouraged engagement and how did the sequencing facilitate an extended dialogue?

As this is a brief reflection I will not reflect on the two days separately but rather give examples to support these claims.

The beginning of the day was about individual and course introductions. It was about learning about each other and providing a foundation for open discussion throughout the day. During the second workshop participants played games for the first half an hour (approximately) before introductions. The exercises acted as ice-breakers but also introduced concepts (experienced physically) that would underpin the day. These included: fun and enjoyment, challenge, trust and opening ourselves to others, risk, release, building relationships and many others that I probably did not perceive. In the introduction sessions of the two days participants were given a time to talk about themselves as teachers. This was a very important part of the workshop as it established from the beginning a focus on the teachers and their experiences of teaching. After this they were requested to gift their journal and offer words of encouragement to a fellow teacher. Having this exchange so early in the day made it possible for participants and facilitators to engage in more open dialogue later in the day as an atmosphere of trust and mutual appreciation was nurtured.

As part of the workshop introductions the purpose of the workshop was explained by Mike. Participants sat in a circle, in the centre of the circle there was a pair of sunglasses, a hammer, a torch and a wire sculpture. Participants were then to explain what these objects meant to them as teachers. In general the issues they raised related to their roles as educators; the status of education at the moment; and students. After the teachers discussed this they were then introduced to the reflection action cycle and how these

objects represented different aspects of the cycle. In this way participants first engaged with their own thoughts and then the group was brought to a common understanding of what these objects meant in the context of the workshop and also the concepts they would be exploring throughout the day.

The second part of the workshop was the marshmallow exercise, a simple and fun exercise that facilitated the emergence of themes related to teaching in a nonthreatening way. At the end of the exercise participants were asked what that experience told them about themselves as educators. This served as a way to open up discussion about some sensitive topics: a teacher raised that he thought some teachers were inflexible and that that made them less effective in 'adjusting' to the changes that were happening; there were also lingering feelings of certain traditions in schools being an imposition of white authority; an identification that students are fragile and need to be treated with care; and a recognition that teachers are part of the problem that they described. An example of how the workshop was facilitated in a dialogical way is how conflicts in opinion were facilitated: when they arose these were not suppressed in any polite way but rather people were encouraged to say what they were feeling. An example of where this occurred was where one of the teachers brought up that he felt that teachers were not willing to change. Another participant objected to this statement strongly commenting that they have so much to deal with that it is unfair to expect them to keep changing how they do things. The facilitator then reflected that this participant was so full that she needed to 'empty her bucket' (leave some of these things behind) and look forward and that if she could let go of some of the issues she was carrying maybe she could develop a better working relationship with the curriculum advisers. During times like this when participants, or participants and facilitators disagreed without moving forward in a positive way Mike used physical metaphors to illustrate the status of the conversation. This was useful as it seemed to help participants to let go of frustration either through physically doing an action (e.g. two people pushing against each other) or through laughter and using their imagination in a different way.

The third part of the workshop was generally journaling. The journaling exercise was essentially about introducing '*something new*' (journaling). I placed this in italics because I think that a few issues need to be kept in mind. Firstly the participants were teachers

themselves¹⁷ and this exercise seemed to be more linked to formal education activity than what they had done thus far, so how it was presented to them and how they were expected to practice it needed to be facilitated in a way that was sensitive to this. Secondly I think it is important to remember that both facilitators were white males facilitating a group of black largely female participants, with an objective of changing the way they do something. Considering South Africa's history it's important to consider whether this was done in an empowering rather than disempowering way and in a way that did not come across as teachers feeling like they are being told what to do. In terms of the workshop aims how was the tool introduced in a way that facilitated the aim of learning about reflective practice and empowering individuals? It is difficult to address the above issues in a way that attempts to sketch out a fixed method, as one was not employed. What I think is more useful is to consider two adult education principals that I observed underlie how this exercise was undertaken.

Respect and participant as subject

During the introduction of the journaling exercise one of the participants was opposed to the exercise as they had not come prepared to have to write anything. Like other issues raised by participants this was engaged with in a reflective and learning way. The participant was given space to vent her feelings and these seemed to be linked with deeper feelings of frustration which were engaged with by the facilitators. This was an interesting discussion because it illustrated how current attitudes are linked with the political history of the country and the personal ways that it impacted and continues to impact on us. Although this was a very specific discussion¹⁸ what it illustrated is that hanging on to past hurts and frustrations should not undermine how we live our lives now and how we support each other and more generally how we empower ourselves and others. There was also a point in the discussion where the participant openly disagreed with the facilitator. During the discussion the participant rejected the notion that the

¹⁷ This is important as they may already have set ways of working and also they may be quite defensive about being told how to do something especially as they had mentioned that they were already being expected to change the way they were working.

¹⁸ The participant noted how she had changed over the years and how once she was optimistic and that she had become pessimistic and felt that she had nothing to offer. Through the facilitators posing what she was saying in different ways the participants came to the conclusion that if she would write her experience down she had much insight to offer others. She accepted this in what seemed like a slightly begrudging way in the beginning of the exercise. By the end of the journaling exercise she reflected that she could have carried on writing for much longer and that she had not realized how much was inside of her waiting to come out.

facilitator could understand and compare his reality to that experienced by the teachers at the workshop. This was a vital disagreement as the point was raised that there are some issues facing educators that are shared by educators in schools with different access to resources, issues that are linked to governance¹⁹.

In terms of adult education principles the facilitators dealt with her objection to the exercise in a respectful way and through engaging with her and treating her as a subject in her own right she not only engaged with the activity but others were also drawn into the dialogue and wider issues were dealt with.

As previously mentioned this workshop took the form of an extended dialogue. In order to reflect on this exercise it is useful to reconsider what had been discussed previously in the workshops. Issues raised included: the lack of resources available to the teachers and their students, danger in schools and in the communities in which their schools are located, the problem of children being pushed through to higher grades without passing, and the lack of parent support. These are very serious issues and the teachers were resistant to considering alternatives (i.e. not coming from government) to dealing with these. Throughout the workshop different methods were employed to get the teachers to engage with the issues they raised in different ways. As mentioned previously participants engaged in physical actions (including games to relax their bodies and minds so they could engage with the issues in a positive happy mood), facilitators told their personal stories (including their personal histories and personal issues that they had to overcome in their lives), participants told their own stories, opportunities were *capitalized* on as teaching moments where all participating could challenge each other. Until this point in the programme all the activities were done as a group or in smaller groups. This was important for a number of reasons: firstly participants at the workshop came from different schools²⁰ were mixed in terms of age and teaching experience,

¹⁹ It was interesting as although this was recognized, during the course of the workshop I heard the facilitators discuss c'Dabra's vision and the fact that they were not about starting a social movement. If at root however there are problems with the way education is being managed throughout the country it would seem that it would be an acceptable route as teachers could act in a united and strategic way to improve the structures that undermine their practice.

²⁰ This is important to note because although they all came from the same area and faced many similar challenges some teachers explained to me that the schools also experienced different challenges for example some schools closing off entry of pupils that were academically 'poor' so that that schools results

culture and history²¹, gender, as well as differences in personal motivation for attending the course, personality etc. It was therefore vital for the facilitators to provide opportunities for participants to build trust and an interest in each other; secondly participants learnt and developed knowledge through collective engagement, sharing their challenges, experiences, insights and creativity; thirdly participants could be witness to each other's involvement in reflective practice and this had pedagogic value; and lastly it was pleasurable to learn with others rather than the individualistic way that is the general mode of formal education programmes.

The journaling exercise provided a space for participants to reconnect with themselves and their own thoughts after a morning full of mental, emotional and physical engagement with others. In terms of adult education principals this exercise supported the way time was engaged with throughout the workshop; it gave an opportunity to participants to consider what they had learnt and on one of the workshops it gave time for participants to consider their own personal visions which could serve to remind them of their experience at the workshop and guide them after the workshop. While some had gone into the writing exercise reluctantly most of the participants seemed to have engaged heartily with their writing.

In terms of how the journaling is used by c'Dabra I think it was positive that participants were not expected to share what they had written as this would be in opposition to the principles that underpinned the workshop thus far especially in terms of the learners being decision makers in their own learning. Should they feel that their personal reflections are part of homework set by others it may have impacted on what they would have chosen to reflect on and how.

Journal writing was followed by reflection on this exercise.

The fourth part of the workshop differed on the two days. On the first day the teachers did an exercise which looked at considering what is a learner and what is a teacher. On

always looked good, this placed extra 'burdens' on other schools who had to deal with more students and students who were academically weaker.

²¹Some participants were from other provinces in South Africa and grew up in more rural areas, while other participants grew up and studied in urban areas. Participants also seemed to have different experiences of Apartheid where some seemed to be more active in struggles. This requires more understanding.

the second day the teachers focused on their personal visions through a sculpting exercise and then through journaling. The sculpting exercise required us to link our intellect and emotions with our bodies and helped people to envision how they would like to see themselves.

The last part of the workshop was generally a debrief session which included a brief reflection of how we found the workshop. I felt that this could have been an opportunity to reflect on the workshop method and participants experiences to a greater degree. This would have given the participants another opportunity to consider the relevance of reflection and how it could impact on their teaching. In addition issues discussed throughout the day could have been recapped.

General Observations:

Popular educators comment that we learn critical thinking by doing critical thinking and that we learn a new value system by working within it and testing it in our own situation. In my observation the workshop followed this assertion by facilitators modelling the activity and values that they attempted to teach. In the beginning of this report I noted several requirements that seemed to be necessary for facilitators to begin including reflection in a disciplined way into their practice. These included: seeing the need for and value in reflective practice; having a sense of hope that they and their schools can change for the better; believe in their ability to contribute to positive change in their schools and the immediate community; engage in honest personal reflection; take time to write journals and to contemplate what arose through the writing process; and possibly take action where this was identified as a necessary step.

Seeing the need for and valuing reflective practice

Throughout the workshop these issues were addressed in different ways. The relevance and usefulness of reflection was demonstrated through the discussions and reflections that participants and facilitators engaged in (linked to their practice as educators and the course activities). Many lessons were generated throughout the day through reflecting on actions and discussions. The question I was left with though was did the teachers think that reflection was something that they thought could contribute to changing the situations they described? I thought that it would have been useful for them to have

reflected on what was yielded through the reflection parts of the workshop (i.e. when reflecting on an action taken). During the debriefing session at the end of the workshop and at check-in (moments during the workshop where participants commented on how they were feeling) participants brought up issues that were raised during reflection times, e.g. now I see that I can also be part of the problem. I think it would have been useful for them to have considered how the overall methods facilitated the emergence of these discussions.

Hope

I think that hope was generated in many ways in the workshop. Participants spoke of the problems they faced but instead of this turning into negative conversations, these issues were reflected back to them by recourse to history, introducing them to current creative ways that others are dealing with the same problem, and challenging their own role in the situation. In addition through supporting the relationships amongst participants through fun and laughter but also through allowing participants to engage in disagreement created a sense of energy and hope. Another way that hope was generated was through valuing black African culture during the course thereby illustrating that alternatives need not only be found in Western concepts and ways but that people themselves can come up with their own answers.

Participants on the first course noted that they felt more positive by the end of the course. This was supported by the comments of some of the participants on the second workshop who came with an expectation of being motivated (probably because that is what their colleagues had relayed). During the second workshop Mike seemed to work on these expectations in a different way working with those teachers to develop a vision. As previously mentioned I think that having a more organic structure facilitated learning beyond the workshop.

Self-belief

The third issue I noted was that it was important for participants to believe in their own abilities to drive change. Integral to this is the development of self-confidence and trust in others. I think that the development of teachers self-awareness and their self-worth were supported by the methods employed and the style of facilitation. The participants were

listened to closely throughout the workshop and issues that different individuals raised were used as points of reference for discussion, the on-going dialogues that I refer to above. In terms of supporting self-awareness at times participants were challenged by each other and Mike in a way that made them rethink their own attitudes, beliefs and understandings. On another level the workshop also modelled how we need not shy away from challenges and that these can be used as learning moments, rather than times when we have to defend ourselves or others. In terms of supporting the development of self-confidence the section in methods under *respect and participant as subject* (above) also illustrate how participants self-confidence was supported through complex ways throughout the workshop. I consider this to have been an essential aspect to Mike's aim of supporting the teachers to see themselves as active²² participants in the workshop.

Honesty

During the workshop no one noted that reflection needed to be honest, after all what would the point be of dishonest reflection besides to protect ourselves or others or keep a certain situation hidden for other reasons. This was left up to the individuals on the course to consider for themselves. Although this was the case I think that the workshop touched on dealing with one's own truth. An example of this was through modelling: for example the facilitators discussed some of their own weaknesses and a little of their personal histories with the group. For example instead of using hypothetical examples that would allow for Mike to maintain a certain power over the group there were instances where he shared personal challenges that he faced and unhealthy reactions and attitudes that he had in a way that showed that these are not to be shied away from but rather learnt from.

In another way through supporting the relationships between participants and participants and facilitators throughout the workshop I think this may have also made participants feel more relaxed around each other and confident to express, honestly, what they were feeling. This assertion is supported by the fact that participants shared stories with the group, challenged facilitators and each other, engaged enthusiastically with the exercises and mostly engaged in the discussions. In addition during the debriefing sessions

²² I take active to mean active in terms of their role as both learners and teachers in the workshop and understand that they have the power to shape the workshop to suite their needs, mindful that they are part of a group.

participants noted that they may also be contributing to the situation that they described in the schools. In the introduction part of the workshop the teachers spoke a lot about the problems that they faced in a way that seemed to exclude their contribution to these issues and throughout the workshop began to reflect that they may also have a role to play in these 'now I see that I am also part of the problem', 'when our learners come to us they are also fragile' were some of the reflections that the teachers made.

Journaling and the reflection action cycle

Committing to journaling takes perseverance. Adults have many responsibilities and taking on another exercise may seem like a unwelcome task. In terms of taking time to write in journals I think this is linked to issues of relevance. I think that the teachers may have benefited from more journaling during the course and time to reflect on the usefulness of this to them and their work. While this is the case many participants responded positively to the exercise commenting that that they could have carried on writing for longer.

I understood journaling to be a mixture of the reflection and observation part of the reflection action cycle but that one needs to reflect on what was written and then reform ones theory for action. During the second workshop that I observed this was done to an extent where participants journaled around a vision in the last part of the workshop. Then too though the process was not reflected on.

Although participants did reflect on the journaling exercise briefly at the end, there may have been an exercise or time dedicated to what happens after this observation/reflection (reflect and consider how we would act differently). This may have been difficult to incorporate however considering that this was a one day workshop.

Note:

These are my initial reflections of my observation of the two days' workshop please let me know if you think I have portrayed anything inaccurately or if I have been over-determinate in my claims.

APPENDIX 10

Observation of Hanover Park Men's Group

Workshop Date: 13 July 2009

Submitted to CASE.

These observations of the Hanover Park Men's Group creative session form part of my investigation into the nature of popular education as practiced by Mike. In line with this I have briefly considered my reflection of the session and the men in terms of the following: the session content, the methods employed, how curiosity and an interest in learning is nurtured in the group and reflected in the educators approach to the engagement, whether power is shared within the group and how it is reflected on, learning as a collaborative endeavour and a consideration of what I perceive to be the adult education principles underlying the engagement. I briefly consider these below.

Content

The explicit theme of the workshop was our bodies; how we see and relate to ourselves and how others see us. The way that this theme was explored opened a way for the emergence of other themes including: how do we respond to criticism in our lives, can we use this form of expression in our home, 'what is an artist'. Through the experience of doing/creating the value of artistic expression, in particular sculpting, painting and drawing, as both an individual and collective tool for, among other things, stress management and pleasure was also illustrated.

Implicitly, and related to the above other themes ran below the surface, I understood these to be building relationships, the value of constructive (rather destructive) expression (while reflecting on the session one man spoke of how he had come to the group feeling stressed and down and how he felt released from those feelings) and the importance of nurturing (at the end Mike offered a space for the men to share advice with the young man who had just turned 18).

The theme of 'your body' was general enough for everyone to identify with and allowed for significant themes to surface for each individual through individual interpretation.

Content in this session was not only what was discussed but more about what was experienced, there was little reflection although what was generated (in terms of learning and experience) through the session provided a basis for further learning.

Methods

The following activities were undertaken during the session.

Circle reflections: The circle was used as a place to enter into the session and close the session. In the beginning of the workshop it was used for 'check in' where participants shared what had happened during their week, how they were feeling as well as anything else they wanted to share. It was also used to introduce us to the plan for the evening. At the end of the evening it was used as a space to reflect on the evening, a space for people to give parting words (including how they were feeling) and to give words of advice and encouragement for the young man who turned 18. The circle was used as a space to connect (to ourselves and each other) through reflection, sharing of experiences and discussion.

Sculpting: Moulding your body with clay. Participants were given the instructions to take as much clay as they needed to mould their bodies, they were given 10 minutes to do this. A brief group reflection happened at the end, where we briefly reflected on similarities and differences of the finished sculptures which were all placed together.

Drawing self-portraits: This was an individual and group exercise. The following instructions were given, each person was to take a mirror, pencil and piece of paper. We were then told to draw ourselves as we saw ourselves in the mirror, Mike told us to remember that the pencil can draw thick and thin lines and that we also had different types of lines on our faces. We were given 15mins to draw ourselves. When we were finished we were told to pass our portraits to our left; each person was to draw one thing on the person's portrait they had in front of them. By the end of the exercise everyone should receive their picture back. At the end of this we didn't discuss the exercise but when people expressed dissatisfaction with the images that were returned to them, Mike gave words of assurance that we should not take the images too seriously.

Group painting – Participants were given a large piece of calico (cloth) and red blue and yellow paint. They were given an option of being given a theme, choosing their own or

having no theme. This was discussed and the decision ended as no theme. They were given about 10 mins for this.

All of these exercises had an individual and group component to varying degrees: *people therefore had* opportunities to discover something about themselves through their own endeavour but also through a collective process (through people drawing on *each other's* pictures and reflecting back how they saw the person, sharing creative space in the painting exercise). This collective process was not only structured by Mike though, the learners exercised their power in the session in the form of singing and playing music together other collective processes also seemed to be occurring, related to emotions and identity.

For each of the aforementioned exercises very little instruction was given, these instructions were clear enough for us to know what we should do but also left the exercise open to interpretation. In terms of time we were not rushed, although technically we started late things moved at a relaxed pace with both facilitator and participants taking responsibility for this. As little reflection was done after each exercise as a participant I felt comfortable to take on each new exercise without concerns of how these would be interpreted at that particular time.

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In terms of popular education one of the main approaches I looked for was the action reflection cycle, but reflection in this session was minimal, through discussion with Mike I was told that this was deliberate so as not *to interrupt the creative flow*.

In terms of creating a culture for the group 'rituals' were used which I thought served to differentiate that space from others spaces, in particular as a space where one could feel not only comfortable but encouraged to participate and develop a group identity.

Nurturing curiosity and a desire to learn: how does he encourage 'lifting of the lid'?

Spaces/opportunities were constantly created for the group to learn from each other (both facilitator and the participants), this removed the notion of an outside expert who has all the answers and reaffirmed what people knew and the value of this: as knowledge and wisdom to be shared. An example of this was when the group was provided with a space to provide words and encouragement and advice for the young man who had turned 18, another example of this for me was how one of the participants closed the session for the evening, in my

experience this is generally the educator's role. While this was the case input was not unquestioned, for example when one young man made a comment about his portrait not being as it should be because he wasn't a proper artist, he was challenged: what is a proper artist? This could also be interpreted as questioning the notion of an expert.

In general the methods, content, facilitation and relationship between the men encouraged participation. I have already discussed how I think this happened in terms of method and content. In terms of facilitation I think this was encouraged by how power was distributed in the group, both between the men as participants and between the facilitator and participants.

In terms of creating an atmosphere conducive to learning Mike nurtured the group as a relaxed but alert space. The tone was set with the opening of the session and the pace was kept throughout. This atmosphere was also *created* by the men through their engaged participation and the way they claimed the session as their own, embarking eagerly on activities and sharing with each other and being candid in their inputs.

Through the way Mike shared what he had learnt from others (We're high on wisdom – WOW) it also encouraged an understanding of learning and knowledge as an ongoing process that is part of his development, and in this way he creates the space for his knowledge and understanding to be questioned.

Power

The men attending the workshop ranged from about 18 years old to maybe late 50's. Given the often hierarchical relationship that comes with age it is notable that both the younger and older men were active and verbal in the session. Those new to the group were also actively encouraged to feel welcome in the group and at the end were given words of encouragement by those who are longer term members of the group.

This sharing of power between the men was reflected in the facilitation. Keeping in mind the specific nature of this session as a creative one, facilitation as previously mentioned was minimal, in terms of who spoke more I would approximate that 70% of the time the men did their own work and spoke between themselves and 30% of the talking was done by Mike. Although general times were given for the exercises these were never enforced by the facilitator but rather left up to the men. In addition the session was closed by one of the

young men (the birthday boy). In this way the facilitation provided structure and direction without undermining the men's agency.

The men exercised their agency through song from the beginning of the sessions, intermittently throughout the workshop and closed the workshop with music, this occurred before and after the more formal entry into the session through the 'circle', as an informal ritual through which the session was made their own.

Although power was not an explicit topic in the workshop, through the opportunities created for the men to exercise agency (for example through the lives of the men being the themes for exploration as defined by them, i.e what they choose express) it is incorporated into the engagement in a way that encourages individuality and independence.

One of the ways I think they exercised their power, or claimed the space was through singing e.g. in the beginning of the meeting and during the painting.

Educational Principles

In terms of the educational principles underlying the engagement I felt that the following principles were present: respect as integral to the engagement; relevance, in that the workshop was something requested by the participants and the content focused on their experiences.

Last note

These observations were of a single session, as I have no previous engagement with the group or familiarity with their process should I have been overdeterminate in my observations please let me know.

APPENDIX 11

Hanover Park background information

Hanover Park is located approximately 20 kilometres north of Cape Town. The settlement was built and designated a coloured area: in the early 1980's in response to the divisive Group Areas Act coloured people were forcibly removed there. This racial separation has not been undone and the area continues to be home mostly to coloured people (Statistics South Africa, 2001). Key problems in the area include high levels of unemployment (Statistics South Africa 2001), insecure land tenure and a lack of facilities (including schools and recreational facilities) (City of Cape Town 2003). A serious issue which is a manifestation of the historical oppression and inequality of apartheid is gang violence (Reckson & Becker 2005). The repercussions of this are felt throughout the community. Reckson and Becker (2005:109) note how even in schools children do not escape gang violence: 'With the recent increase of rival gang fights and the targeting of schools by gangsters, teachers began to report increasing concern for learners' psychological health, personal safety and security'

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APPENDIX 12

Langa background information

Langa is the oldest existing township in the Western Cape (Anderson and Field 2003). The area continues to reflect its segregated past with the majority of those living there falling within the black African population group (Statistics South Africa 2001). The legacy of unequal development continues to affect the residents of this area. There are more people, of employable age, that are unemployed than employed in the area. Furthermore there is a high number of people who have not completed schooling up to senior certificate level. In terms of physical development there is poor infrastructural development with many residents living in informal homes, while the majority of those living in the area reside in hostels (Statistics South Africa 2001). Furthermore due to the nature and politics of settlement patterns during apartheid contemporary tensions are experienced between those who are born in the area and those who have settled their more recently and attempted to secure land tenure (Eppel 2007).

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APPENDIX 13

c'Dabra course notes

APPENDIX 14

Description of documentary evidence drawn on in study

Ekitchini: The Hidden Side of Women's Labour (Abrams 1988)

This dissertation was submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for a degree of Masters of Arts in Economic History at the University of Cape Town. The dissertation abstract is presented below to provide a summary of the paper:

This dissertation seeks to examine an area of South African historiography which has largely been ignored, that is, domestic labour. It posits a relationship between working class women, domestic labour paid and unpaid. The material has been arranged around the primary objectives of examining the silence around domestic labour and highlighting the gender content of domestic work. It is divided into parts. The first part examines the conceptualisation of class and gender struggles, while the second part examines aspects of working class women's experiences of this. Chapter One deals with why women have been ignored in recorded history; Chapter Two examines Marxist approaches to the Women Question. Chapter Three examines the silence around women's experiences in South African historiography, while Chapter Four is a critical examination of the recorded history of domestic workers. Chapter Five examines aspects of black working class women's experience of domestic labour in their own families, while Chapter Six documents the experience of a group of organized workers in Cape Town. The study concludes that the way forward is to develop a gender sensitive class analysis as outlined in the work of Lise Vogel. This will open up new areas for research, for example, the rise of the public and private dichotomy, the separation of productive and reproductive labour, the ideology of motherhood and sexuality as well as the changing nature of the social construction of gender identity.

The methodology used in the study was a participatory one, whereby drama and storytelling were used as research tools for the women to tell their life stories. This process also led to the development of *Ekitchini*.

Ekitchini (Ekitchini Collective, circa 1988)

This document developed out of Mike's agreement with SADWU to produce a booklet out of the research that he undertook for his Master's thesis. What is reflected in this booklet are the key issues that emerged for the women through their involvement in the research process, as identified by them. The Preface to the book provides the context for the document in the women's own words:

(Ekitchini Collective, circa 1988)

circle songs: building new sources of power (Abrams and Motsemme, 1999)

This document provides a thought provoking reflection of popular education work with women youth prisoners in the juvenile section of Pollsmore Prison. It begins by contextualising the lives of youth against global and South African socio-political and historical conditions. It then explains the ideological and pedagogic theory underpinning the learning programme that was developed for the intervention. These centre around community theatre and popular education. The report documents how in order to work with the young women a new concept was developed, the idea of the 'confrontational space' in which all involved, facilitators, wardens and inmates, 'were challenged and forced anew to re-examine ourselves and our relation to the community' (Abrams and Motsemme 1999:11).

Reflecting this idea the report documents the project both in terms of the work that was done with the women as well as the personal work that facilitators engaged in based on the various challenges they faced during the intervention. The document reveals that the project had a strong therapeutic component as well as behaviour change component. Popular education imperatives – including: breaking through apathy, creating new sources of power, creating a sense of equality between all involved and providing space for women to re-name and reclaim their experiences and identities – are ubiquitous throughout. The report documents how these and other popular education principles were interpreted in practice in a number of different activities including: playing games, developing a theatre piece, hair dying, rap, cooking lessons, making a radio programme together with a community radio station (Bush Radio), dancing, conflict resolution as well as other activities. The report also documents various aspects of the project process.

Cooking up Community (Fine & Abrams 2003)

This publication is a project report that was produced from a project undertaken in Bonteheuwel in partnership, with what was in 2003, the City of Tygerburg. It provides an in depth description of the approach taken and rationale for why the project was approached the way that it was. It details the process that was undertaken through: providing insights into the philosophy underpinning the project; explaining what partnerships were formed; explaining the different stages of the project and drawing on examples to illustrate some of the complexities of these development processes; presenting stories of some of the exercises that were undertaken; and providing personal (as facilitators and programme organisers) reflections on different aspects of the project.

The forward of this book provides the context for this work (Soraya Solomon) and the impact as described by one of the participating Principals (Ghairoonisha Cupido) and is presented below.

(in Fine and Abrams 2003)

Men Cry Bullets: reflections on the internal exile of men in South Africa (Hands-On n.d.)

This document was handed out to delegates at an Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR) Academic Roundtable. This Roundtable was to be part of a long term aim 'to concretise mechanisms for sustainable leadership in vulnerable communities' (IJR 2009). The key questions framing the workshops were:

How has multiple wounded-ness become systemic, one result being masculine identities that have normalised violence?

Community leadership and its capacity to build in this context. What solutions are there based on learning from our current history?

Based on the men's work that Hands-On was involved in, they shed light on these questions in this document.

The report begins with a reflection on the legacies of colonialism, apartheid and racial capitalism on the social fabric and individual identities: this is encapsulated in the notion of a 'multiply wounded society'. Part of this includes a brief discussion of the violence that is present in the social and cultural life of South Africans. Thereafter there is a discussion of how these legacies of colonisation and apartheid have affected masculine identities and their formation. The document then describes how Hands-On has attempted to implement a people centred practice 'in a traumatised nation'. In particular they note: 'we have come to understand that the healing of the scars and continuous personal development is a necessary part of the ability of our nation to meet the development challenges we face' (Hands-On 2010:5). Aspects of pedagogy (including what can be considered as organising), are then reflected on in light of this. The document then goes on to detail some of the work that Hands-On has undertaken (and was involved in at that time). The document closes with comments on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the need to continue the process of healing.

APPENDIX 15

Work²³ Involvement

This table is not exhaustive but gives insight into the different organisations that the practitioner has worked with over the last 10 years.

Organisation/Group with whom he worked	Brief Description
Department of Social Development	Involved in starting a men's group and family reconstruction.
Trauma Centre	On the Board of Trustees.
Community Healing Network	Assists with securing funding, workshop facilitation, helping to set the direction organisation.
Popular Education Working Group	As an activist, facilitator and participant.
CASE Hanover Park	Facilitator and organiser for the men's group.
Extra Mural Education project (EMEP)	Project Hope. Working with school communities, teacher development programme.
Treetops	Facilitator and developed a programme around masculinities.
C'Dabra	Teacher Development.
Impumelelo Awards	Evaluator
Africa Contact	Youth at risk program in and leadership programme for youth leaders
Trauma Centre	Organisational Development intervention – vision for the next 10-20 years
Direct Action Centre for Peace and Memory	Healing and therapeutic intervention, with struggle veterans.
South African History Online	Using cell phones to make the site accessible
City of Cape Town	Community leadership development.
SANGOCO	Facilitating dialogue on youth development.
Siyake an anti-drug project	Assists with securing funding, facilitates workshops, assists with other organizational issues.
Sex Worker Education and Training (SWEAT)	Providing support for the movement to identify a way forward in organising sex workers, setting up a story telling group, and working with the sex workers to develop a leadership group through providing a therapeutic space through a range of creative exercises.
San Souci	Training programme for Prefects
UWC, School of Government, South African Development Education Programme SADEP	Course: Facilitating Reconstruction and Development (training in community development) Participants: community activists
	Four people in coaching relationships with him.
	Writing article on Multiply Wounded Nation.

²³

This refers to both paid and unpaid work and is not exhaustive.

APPENDIX 16

Brief description of the Popular Education Working Group

The Popular Education Working Group developed out of the need to strengthen the popular education movement in South Africa. This need was affirmed during a national consultative workshop that was held in Gugulethu by the Institute for Democracy in South Africa's (IDASA) School for Democracy in June 2008 (ALN, IDASA, Hands On, 2008). It was recognised that many “people and their initiatives are committed to keeping the spirit of popular education alive” (ibid. 2).

The rational underpinning the need to rebuild a popular education movement is summarised in the workshop report as follows:

At present neo-liberal forms of education dominate learning and development creating a focus on the individual while negating the power of the collective. Due to the developments of the last 15 years our networks and movements which we built to harness the potential of popular education have grown weaker. However in this context the potential of popular education to assist in the collective transformation toward a just society remains as strong as ever. (ALN, IDASA, Hands On, 2008)

Three organisations that were present at that workshop, Adult Learning Network, Hands On and IDASA, then undertook a similar meeting in the Western Cape. The process began with discussions on what is popular education and reflections on the history of popular education in struggle internationally. The South African context was then reflected on. These ideas were then brought together so that the group could consider whether something should be initiated or not. (ibid).

The decision from this workshop was “to start a Popular Education movement/ collective /forum, the basis of which is at the moment to share existing practice, but also to support each other in existing practice” (ibid:32). Since that time a number of meetings and workshops have been undertaken and a Popular Education School was held in 2010.

Brief description of the Hands-On-Collective

Hands On is a collective of popular educators that work together in a variety of ways on a variety of projects. Some of their work includes working with youth, men and communities and one of their focuses is on trauma. The group is made up of men and women of varying ages working on a number of different projects simultaneously. There is no hierarchy among the members.

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APPENDIX 17

Example of democratic forums

APPENDIX 18

Example of working with those in relative positions of power

